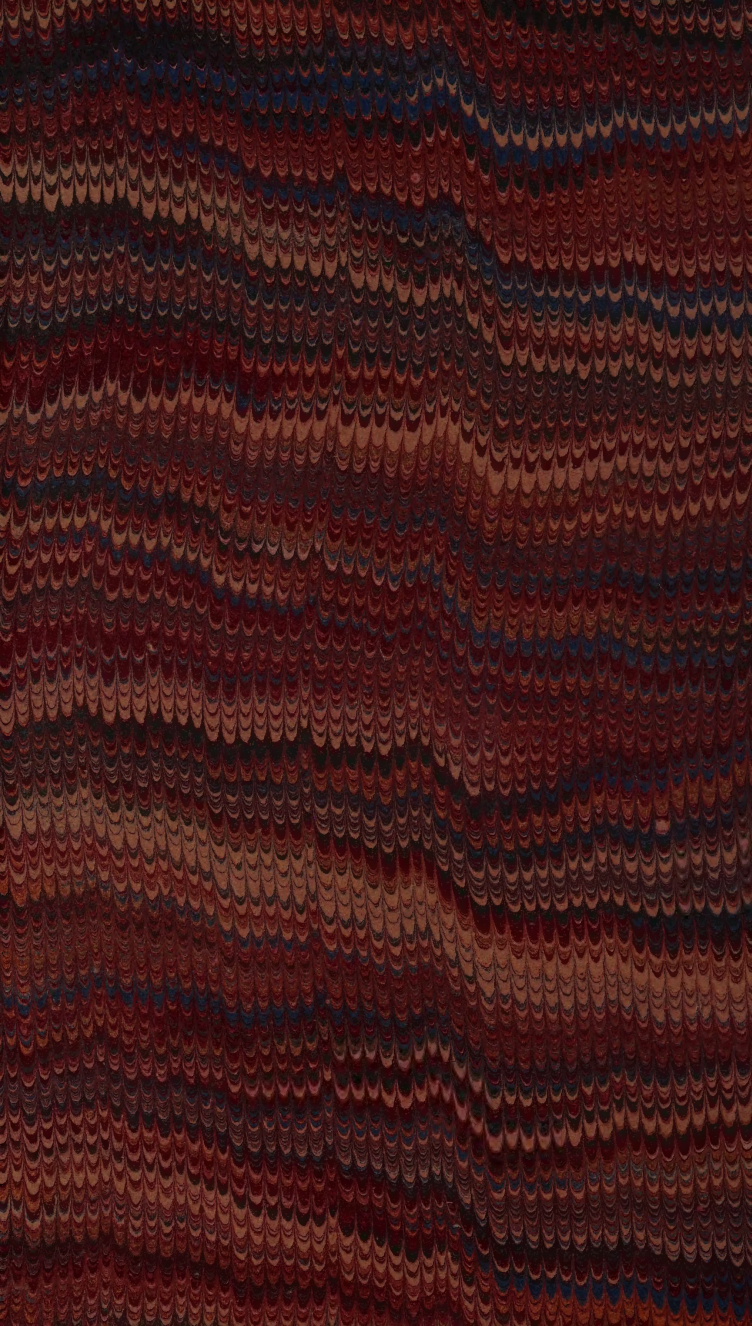
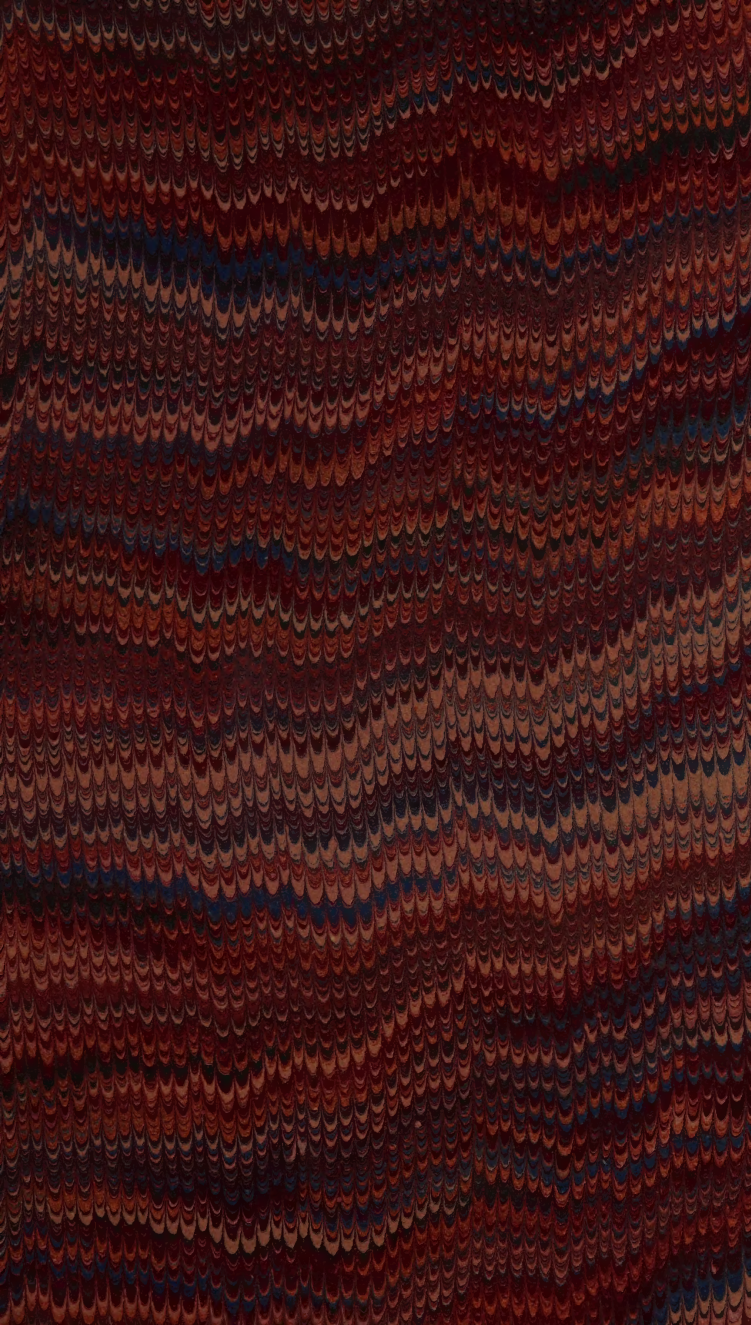






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ADVENTURES
OF
A MEDICAL STUDENT.

BY
ROBERT DOUGLAS,
SURGEON, ROYAL NAVY.

WITH
A MEMOIR OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

THE life of a young, ambitious, and talented man, whose career has been brought to a sudden and premature close, cannot be entirely without interest. The hardships he endured, and the difficulties he surmounted, may also render a record of it valuable to those who are labouring under like disadvantages. There are, no doubt, many young men, with talents equal to his, animated with as great ardour and enthusiasm, and feeling as strong a thirst for distinction, who are at this moment enduring sufferings as severe as those he experienced. To them his example must be an especial lesson of profit, by showing to them what industry and perseverance can accomplish.

Robert Douglas was born in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, in 1820, and was the second son of Edward Douglas, Esq., portioner, who at one time carried on an extensive business in that city. When very young, his father removed to a large house situated in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, which, from the vast extension of the city, is now reckoned within its boundaries. Here Robert, together with an elder brother, since dead, was put to a private school, where he acquired the fundamental parts of an English education. The few joyous years which were passed while attending this school, when, in the perfection of childish glee, he used to ramble through the fields, plucking the wild flowers as he went, or wander alone by the brink of the river, and dream away the day, he has often said, formed the only purely happy portion of his life.

In the winter of 1843, the writer of this notice, with another of his intimate friends, accompanied him on a visit to these early scenes. The fields were covered with snow, and the trees, many of which he recognised as "old familiar friends," were leafless and solitary. The old house in which he was born had fallen into a melancholy state of dilapidation; it was, apparently,

inhabited by humble, but respectable working-people, and, it being Sunday, we refrained from intruding upon their privacy. He took great interest in noticing all the associations connected with the place; calling to remembrance the yearly floods, or *spates*, that used to create the greatest consternation in the family, when the river overflowed its banks, compelling them to seek refuge in the upper flats, where they remained in terror till the water subsided. One of the *spates* he mentioned as occurring very shortly after he was born was so sudden and alarming that his father deemed it prudent to remove to a neighbour's house situated farther up the road. With this intention he had taken the infant upon his shoulders, and was wading up to the middle through the fast increasing flood, when he stumbled and both were in a moment overwhelmed in the water. Having regained his footing, he did not again attempt to proceed, but returned with his precious burden to the distracted mother, who, along with the other members of the family, had been watching his progress from one of the windows with inexpressible anxiety.

The large house where he had spent so many happy hours while attending the school was also sadly altered:

the two small houses or wings on each side were removed, and their places occupied by two large, elegant, new buildings. Everything around was bare and cheerless. The iron railing was rusty and divested of ornament, and the gate, broken off its hinges, lay half covered with snow; while the old house itself, with its cracked, dirty windows, shrunk back, like a shabby gentleman, as if ashamed of the appearance which it made beside its wealthy neighbours. The school-house, with its low roof and patched windows, could scarcely be recognised as a weaver's shop, and the play-green, at one end, was transformed into a receptacle for ashes and other rubbish, the refuse of a dyework erected on the opposite side of the way.

There was something so peculiarly touching in the aspect which every object presented during this visit, that he appeared to take a melancholy pleasure in dwelling on the associations they recalled to his mind. The few years that had elapsed since he had lived among them, which had been to him one continued hard struggle with adversity, now happily overcome, seemed to have borne with a heavier hand upon these fast-fading landmarks of his childhood. It was with a swelling bosom that he left them, grieving at

their destined decay, and little dreaming that the shadow of death would close so soon on his own brief career.

On the death of his mother, a virtuous and talented woman, of whom he always spoke with becoming reverence and deep regret for her untimely loss, his father, owing to the nature of his business, which required the whole of his attention, found it necessary to remove to the centre of the city. Robert, who was now reckoned a good English scholar, was therefore sent to the classical department of the High school, to acquire a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, previously to his entering the University. It was here that he first gave token of that ability, for which he has since become creditably known, namely, his talent as a story-teller.

From childhood he was remarkable for his abstracted and meditative behaviour, having often been found wandering alone or sitting musing by the brink of the river, where he would remain for hours, indulging in the most extravagant fancies. To such a degree did he carry this behaviour that his playfellows bestowed upon him the unwelcome sobriquet of "Daft Bobby." With this title he was highly displeased,

and ultimately he was compelled to relinquish his favourite amusement, or indulge in it only where there was no fear of interruption or discovery. The observant reader will be able to trace, in this phase of the young author's life, the germ of the "Strange Student," a tale which he contributed to Hood's Magazine for February, 1844.

Compared with what is recorded of many of our young authors, he could not be called an extensive reader. But he possessed a remarkable memory; and, being a close observer of men and manners, he kept his eyes and ears open in whatever company he happened to mix; so that, at a very early age, he could give an opinion upon most subjects, displaying a freedom of expression and an originality and depth of thought which often astonished his hearers. One of the many books, however, which were especial favourites with him while attending the High school, was an old volume of the 'Times' newspaper, published about the beginning of the present century. Over this seemingly dry volume he pored for whole days, reading right on through leading articles of foreign and domestic politics, slavery meetings, law-suits, critical notices, theatrical intelligence, police reports, murders,

robberies, and all the other temporary topics that are to be found in this grand panorama of English life. He used afterwards to remark that from this volume he gathered a large amount of general information, and allowed that it exercised a considerable influence in strengthening the bias which he naturally felt to be reckoned a good teller of tales. Several of his school companions remember the eagerness with which they used to gather round him, on rainy days, while waiting in the lobby of the Grammar-school, and listen to his strange and marvellous stories, many of which were founded on incidents gleaned from the source alluded to. At first it was only on the wet, stormy days, when the state of the weather prevented them from carrying on their usual games in the play-ground, that they sought amusement in this way, to supply the place of that from which they were precluded. But when he had acquired the knowledge to construct and carry out a regular plot, and began to improve in the choice of his language, together with the occasional introduction of the dramatic inflexion of the voice, with suitable gestures, he became so exceedingly popular among his schoolfellows, that every other amusement was for a time discarded, as failing to produce the same excite-

ment, or to afford them the supreme pleasure which they found in listening to his wonderful stories.

The choice of a proper profession for a spirited young man is always a critical affair, as upon that generally depends his destiny during life, for good or evil. Douglas was fortunate in this respect. With the consent of his friends, after mature consideration, he adopted the medical profession, as that best suited to his temper and talents. Accordingly he entered the University with the decided advantage of having a definite object in view,—a thing which many of the students often want,—in accordance with which he was enabled to shape the course of his future studies.

It was while attending the gown-classes that he first read, in the pages of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' those excellent sea-novels, 'Tom Cringle's Log,' and the 'Cruise of the Midge.' For these works he always professed the highest admiration, marks of which will be found in his own tales, observable in the minute, life-like descriptions of scenery, and the occasional powerful delineation of dark and passionate, yet natural character. From this period also he dated his determination of entering the navy as a surgeon, deeming that he possessed sufficient interest to procure

an appointment, and being fully aware of the long probationary discouragement which a young practitioner has to encounter before he is able to earn a livelihood on shore.

Like the majority of young writers, he made his *début* in the field of literature as a maker of verses ; his abilities in this line being called forth in the Logic class by a prize offered by the professor, Dr. Buchanan, for the best copy of verses,—subject, ‘The Fall of Mona.’ The average attendance of this class is about two hundred and fifty ; and, on carrying off the prize from among this number, he was greatly elated, the pleasure being increased by the eulogium of his professor, who spoke highly of the originality and vigour of thought displayed in his poem. The same year he took two other prizes in the other classes which he attended ; and indeed, in every successive session, with the exception of the last, when he declined entering as a competitor, he was a successful candidate. And here we may as well mention that, before leaving for the Navy, he distributed amongst his acquaintances between twenty and thirty of these trophies of his diligence.

Several of his early poetical effusions first appeared

in the 'Glasgow Courier' newspaper, and other local publications, with the Celtic signature of "Sholto." All of them are distinguished for originality of conception and felicity of sentiment, and will bear comparison with the best pieces of Michael Bruce or Robert Nicoll, written at the same age. Like those of the latter, they are true pictures of the writer's mind. "His heart is written in his poems," and, we may add, in his tales also; the whole of which are pervaded by his personal feelings and opinions. A few of his short poems, which he afterwards retouched for the 'New Monthly Magazine,' were favourably received by the public.

The heroines of these love-effusions, for all his verses belong to this class, were no ideal paragons, existing only in the teeming brain of the young poet, but real flesh and blood personages,—ladies of his acquaintance, who of course felt more than honoured by the tokens of admiration displayed by the young medical student. Of the fair sex in general he was always an ardent admirer; and often, when he could ill afford it, would he steal an hour or two from his evening studies to enjoy the pleasure of their company. Upon his personal appearance he placed no reliance;

but, apart from this, no one was better fitted to win their esteem. Possessing extraordinary conversational talent, ready, sparkling wit, and a great flow of animal spirits, with a complete and correct knowledge of the female mind, he always succeeded with them in making himself a favoured and welcome guest.

The profession which he had chosen was well adapted for the study of the human mind and the observation of frail nature, stripped of its outward trappings. The mind depressed with disease becomes careless of the worldly tinsel that usually screens its failings. The cloak of hypocrisy is no longer available; and when the patient has arrived at the state which leads him to seek for comfort from that source where it is never denied, the physician in such cases will always find suitable subjects for deep thought and serious meditation.

While attending the hospitals, Douglas had ample opportunity for study. Many of his tales are founded on incidents which he witnessed there, and which are sometimes pictured with a vividness and minuteness of detail that never fail to awaken an interest in the reader; occasionally too, by the way, to create a feeling something akin to horror. From such passages,

many will conclude that they were penned by an individual of gloomy character and morbid imagination. But it is not from his writings that a just idea of his powers or character can be formed, though the public, of course, will judge of him from his compositions. Those who were long intimate with him knew well that his mind partook largely of the cheerful gaiety characteristic of buoyant youth, and had nothing of that gloom which is remarkable in his writings.

His forte, unquestionably, was description. He possessed an uncommon power of taking in at a glance all the features of a scene or a landscape; indeed, whatever he had once looked upon was so indelibly impressed upon his memory, that, long afterwards, he could write a faithful description of it, even to the minutest particulars. All who have read his tales, and are familiar with the scenery for a few miles around his native city, can easily point out the locality, though described under another name. He took great pleasure in strolling about the country, and was thoroughly acquainted with every nook and by-road for miles around. This was the chief out-door exercise in which he indulged, unless, perhaps, football-playing,

of which he was always passionately fond. It was a favourite game with the students in the College park, where he was often to be found ; but he also took great delight in occasionally mixing among the *riff-raff* of the city, who were in the habit of pursuing the same game in the long summer evenings on the public green. Amongst these he was well known, and he used to astonish them by the expertness which he displayed and the enthusiasm with which he enjoyed the diversion.

When another year at the classes would have completed his course of study, qualifying him to appear before the faculty for his diploma as a surgeon, an unfortunate change took place in his father's circumstances, which entirely deprived him of the means necessary for pursuing his studies, and, for a time, threatened to put a stop to them altogether. A series of reverses of fortune, which we do not deem it essential to particularize, put it out of his father's power to afford him that aid on which he had hitherto relied.

This sad reverse was a severe discouragement to young Douglas. At the time, he knew of no quarter

where he could properly apply. He had, therefore, no alternative but to relinquish his studies, and, for a short time at least, devote himself to some manual employment. Although he had been aware of the straitened circumstances of his father, he expected to have been so far improved in his own condition as not to require his help, and therefore was wholly unprepared for the sudden calamity which now befell him. His hardships commenced from this period, and continued for the space of nearly three years, during which it may be said that his life was one continued struggle with poverty.

It is not easy to conceive with what feelings the idea of falling back in life must have been borne by an educated, aspiring, sensitive young man. However, he bore his misfortunes manfully, and, with all the evils of penury staring him in the face, resolved to labour without ceasing till he obtained the means of finishing his education. It was not long before he procured an engagement in a lawyer's office as a copying clerk. The remuneration was small, but, with unusual diligence and an energetic perseverance, for which he was distinguished, he managed to save

as much, in a few months, as enabled him to pay the fees of the few remaining classes which it was necessary for him to attend.

During the session he was constantly employed, when out of the class-room, in the office, copying papers and translating old Latin documents. For the latter work he was rather better paid than for the usual law-papers ; it being considered a more difficult task, and one which few of the clerks could undertake with confidence. To him it presented no difficulty, and, being at liberty to take these papers home, after devoting a few hours to study, he sat down to them, continued writing for the greater part of the night, and generally had them finished in the morning.

In 1841 he went to Edinburgh to obtain his diploma, and, as he expressed it, "passed the board with flying colours." After remaining a few days in the capital, he returned home with his credentials as a licentiate of the Faculty of Physicians, intending immediately to set about procuring an appointment as assistant surgeon in the Navy. It was with this view that he had devoted himself to the study of medical science, always believing that he could command sufficient interest to procure employment. But a few

years had elapsed since then, and now, when fully qualified to make application, the assistance on which he depended was no longer available. A change had taken place in the Government; and with the party in power he had no interest. For some months previously he had been aware of the increased difficulty which the change of ministry would add to his appointment; but he had no idea of the utter hopelessness of his case till now, when he sought the aid of those friends on whom he had depended. He made application in every quarter where he thought there was the slightest chance of success, but all without effect; and, at length, after wandering about for three months, dispirited and almost broken-hearted, he relinquished the idea in sheer despair. The next best thing that occurred to him was to settle down as an ordinary practitioner in his native city, though in this capacity he was fully alive to the almost insurmountable obstacles which a young man would have to encounter before he could work himself into a practice, which, even at the end of a number of years, would barely yield him the means of a very humble subsistence. He considered that, if he could once bring himself prominently before the public, he stood a good chance

of success ; the chief thing was to become known as a man of ability, either in or out of his profession.

At this time he belonged to a literary debating society, the members of which were principally young men in business, with a few students who were desirous of acquiring the habit of speaking fluently in public. Soon after he became a member he made considerable improvement in his mode of address, getting completely rid of that *mauvaise honte*, which is always felt in some degree by amateur orators, so that he could rise on any occasion with the greatest coolness and self-possession, and deliver his opinions upon any topic on which he desired to be heard.

He was proud of his talent as a debater, and, being in the habit of occasionally attending public meetings about this time, he saw several, whom he knew to be less able than himself, making a respectable figure in public, and, by these means apparently, rising into notice. He resolved, therefore, to follow the same course, and ever afterwards lost no opportunity of pushing himself forward. Indeed, his writings were at all times inferior to his conversation. Though sometimes rough and boisterous, from the excessive flow of his spirits, he was at all times easy, entertain-

ing, and agreeable. No one could be dull in his presence ; his manners were so lively, his mode of talking so animated, that the dullest company was sure to be enlivened, and acknowledged his superiority by the attention with which they listened to his conversation. In relating a story or anecdote, he was equal to any man we ever knew. If he had gone out of town for a day, he was certain on his return to have collected a score of yarns, and the subjects of them were often so unimportant, and apparently so destitute of wit or humour, that, but for his mode of telling, they would have failed to excite the slightest interest. It is somewhat surprising that he never attained the same ease in writing. Whenever he attempted dialogue he failed ; nevertheless he often talked of producing a tragedy : there is, however, no evidence among his papers of his ever having begun such a work ; perhaps he was deterred from the attempt by the difficulty he found in moulding his ideas into a dramatic form.

Since he had become a member of the society we have mentioned, he was constantly in the habit of taking a share in every discussion that happened to arise in any private or public company where he

chanced to be present; so that he now felt no restraint or backwardness in appearing before a large audience, where a greater display was looked for. As an instance of these private discussions in which he took such pleasure, we may mention one that occurred in Edinburgh while he was there. It took place in the public room of a large tavern, where a numerous company are daily in the habit of dining economically together. The room was filled with people. During the repast the conversation turned upon the trial of the Glasgow cotton-spinners for conspiracy, which had lately created a strong excitement throughout the whole of Scotland. He had often heard the subject talked of in a small book-shop which he used to frequent, and, being intimate with all its details, he was of opinion, like many others, that the spinners, as a body, were, at that time, hardly dealt with. The tenour of the conversation being rather adverse to this view of it, he ventured in a few words to give his opinion. At first the conversation was confined to a small circle around him, but, very shortly, he found a staunch opponent in the centre of the room, who seemed able and willing to debate the question with him. Judging from his mode of speaking, he appeared to

be a lawyer, and possessed a very fair knowledge of the subject, as well as a thorough acquaintance with the state of the factory-workers generally. The debate was carried on with great spirit, on both sides, for nearly two hours ; when Douglas, after a powerful speech, completely vanquished his opponent, and shortly afterwards left the house in great glee at the astonishment he had created.

While he was looking about for a proper situation to open a shop and commence practising, another opportunity occurred which he thought favourable to his darling project—an appointment in the Navy. The municipal election for the city magistrates was drawing near ; and hearing that a keen contest was likely to take place in the district where his father's property was situated, he determined to take advantage of the opening which the occasion offered for pushing his own interest. The Whig and Tory parties in the district were equally balanced, but the former, being out of power, could of course be of no use to him ; so he determined to favour the latter. After consulting with a number of his father's former and present tenants, all of whom he found favourable to his wishes, he went directly to the Tory candidate, and,

having explained his object, was gratified with the assurance that he would use his influence with his brother, an M.P., to procure him an appointment. With his usual promptitude and energy, Douglas immediately began canvassing, and early on the morning of the election he was at the head of "his fifty faithful Irishmen," as he called them, whom he marshalled up to the polling-booth. At the close of the poll he had the pleasure of hearing his friend declared duly elected, a result which, we have reason to know, was wholly owing to his services. The gentleman was as good as his word. In a few days his application was sent off duly certified, and in less than a fortnight he received a notice from the Secretary to the Board of Admiralty, to proceed immediately to London.

A short time previously to this, while wandering idly about the city, he had written two short sketches in prose, which he submitted to an intimate friend, who advised him to offer them to Mr. Colburn, for his Magazine. With this he complied, though he had slender hopes of their being accepted. He was therefore agreeably surprised, when busy with the election business, on receiving a letter from Mr. Colburn, ex-

pressing his willingness to accept the contributions, and offering what Douglas considered a handsome remuneration.

His prospects now began to brighten; he was an accepted contributor to one of the first-class London magazines, and was in daily expectation of being called up for examination before the Board of Admiralty. He arrived in London on the 7th of December, 1841, and from this date began a close correspondence with the writer of this notice.

He was not long in London before he received an appointment to H.M.S. 'Calcutta,' then stationed in the Mediterranean; and, as he was to take his passage out to Gibraltar in the 'Queen,' he was ordered to proceed to Spithead and join that vessel. His mind was now full of literary projects. Every letter had a new one, and to enumerate them all would take up too much space and answer no good purpose. While in London he composed 'A Tale of Galvanism,' a wild and powerfully-written story, which appeared before he left the metropolis, and at the time attracted considerable attention. He also commenced a translation of one of Lucian's tragedies for the 'New Monthly Magazine;' but, after proceeding

some length he threw it aside, finding, from the nature of the subject, that, without great alteration, it would be impossible to render it suitable for that publication.

On joining the 'Queen,' and after a few months' absence from home, when the excitement of London had left him in quiet, he began to experience that most miserable of all maladies — Home-sickness. Everything around him was strange and foreign. He had not been long enough on board to acquire a friend to whom he could apply for advice or consolation; and, moreover, he was greatly annoyed by the tricks to which all new-comers are subject on first entering the Navy. In a long, melancholy letter, written at this time, he recounts in a most lugubrious strain all his grievances, and expresses a wish that he had never entered the service. Much of the annoyance which he experienced when he first entered the Navy, we have no doubt was owing chiefly to his own behaviour. He had set out in life with much of the ardour and enthusiasm of youthful genius, but, like many young men of undoubted talent, he was deficient in knowledge of the world. At this time he was highly elated by his favourable prospects, and being always of a bold, forward disposition, never felt any

delicacy in speaking of himself or his affairs, and showing that he had a just estimate of his own merits. This being the case, it is not probable that he was less reserved on board, so that, to those who did not know him intimately, he must have appeared as nothing more than a talkative, boastful egotist; any little merit that he gave evidence of possessing being far overbalanced by his seeming self-conceit.

For three months he remained on board the 'Queen,' during which time he composed the 'Widow's Child,' the 'Romance of a Walk,' and the 'Adventures of a Night,' all of which appeared successively in the 'New Monthly,' and were highly spoken of by the papers as they were published.

On the 14th March, 1842, he was transferred to the 'Formidable,' to take his passage out to Gibraltar, there to join his own vessel, then cruising in the Mediterranean. After a very stormy passage he arrived at his destination; and, although it was the first time he had been to sea, he neither then nor all the time he was in the service experienced the slightest touch of sea-sickness. The 'Calcutta' was daily expected, and he had but a few days to look about him before she arrived. In this vessel he visited

the principal ports in the Mediterranean, and, by numerous excursions on shore, he increased his knowledge, not omitting to improve his mind by observation and reflection on all that he witnessed.

From the 'Calcutta' he was transferred to H.M. Steamer 'Polyphemus,' where for two months he had full medical charge of the vessel. With this command he was exceedingly well pleased, and, judging from his correspondence, he seems to have led a very merry life during the short time that it lasted. His letters at this time contain some very amusing adventures, and for some of the "larks" he was afterwards, on his return to England, called to account by the Admiralty.

We are unwilling to swell this notice with unnecessary matter, but, as a specimen of a number of the adventures which he relates, we give the following—he being the only individual implicated. On the 10th of August, 1842, he writes, "I got into a precious scrape the other night here at Gibraltar. There are some beautiful gardens on the outside of the town, where all the inhabitants go late in the evening to promenade. I had been out riding that day into Spain, and after a long ride had drank

a quantity of London porter, and smoked half a dozen cigars, so that I was in rather a queer state. I was not in uniform—that was a mercy—but had on a white jacket and trousers and a black silk hat. Well, as I was staggering through this promenade late at night, on my way to the dockyard, where my steamer was lying, who should I meet but a pretty little woman. I immediately accosted her, and began to make all sorts of mock-love as we walked up a zig-zag slope of the rock, when up came a great heavy Spaniard, who at once recognised the woman as his wife,—she disappeared, and I, being valorous from the porter I had drank, immediately fell upon him with my whip. He stood it wonderfully, and only bawled out at the top of his voice. All of a sudden, up came about a dozen Spaniards, and such a precious jabbering there was! A fight was immediately proposed, to which I making no objection, we fell to it, but on the first fall the Spanish villain *bit* me quite through the left eyebrow. I shall carry the scar to my grave. I felt his teeth meet in the middle of my flesh—it was a strange sensation. One of them made a grab at my handkerchief, but did not get it, the others kicked me most unmercifully, but I, making a

grasp at my hat, which one of them was trying on, showed the heels of a foot-ball player, and bolted, while they pursued—*haud passibus æquis*. I did not feel comfortable till I heard the ‘Who goes there?’ of the sentries at the dockyard;—my face was covered with blood, and I lost my whip, a beautiful thing I bought at Marseilles.”

His next vessel was the ‘Thunderer,’ where he remained from August, 1842, till September, 1843. It was by far the happiest period of his naval life, and during this time he wrote some of his best tales. On his return to England in November, 1842, he paid a short visit to his friends in Scotland; a marked improvement being observable in his appearance. He was no longer the mere boy that he formerly appeared, but a polished, observant, thinking citizen of the world, though he still possessed the hearty, rollicking, exuberant spirit of the medical student. Of late he had begun to place little dependence upon his chance of rising in the service, and now he spoke very lightly of his prospects in this way. His mind was wholly taken up with his literary career, and he appeared resolved to direct his energies towards rising as a writer.

He had always a great abhorrence of being classed

among what are styled the morbid writers. In reply to a letter hinting that his style partook a little of this strain, he says, "I have just finished a tale for Colburn, entitled the 'Story of a Genius:' there is nothing of the horrible or terrible in it. Pray what do you call the witch scene in Macbeth;—shipwreck scene in Don Juan, where folks eat each other;—the passage in the 'Siege of Corinth,' where the dogs eat the dead, and lazily mumble their bones;—the torture scene at the end of 'Old Mortality;'—the scene in 'Rob Roy,' where the Spy is pitched from the precipice into the lake;—or any other of the most celebrated passages in literature? I have always kept such in view when writing, and in all that I have done I have never yet outstepped the bounds of nature or probability."

It will perhaps be interesting to many to see the first rude outline of some of his tales before they were put on paper; the two following are those of the 'Miners' and the 'Outcast,' both published in this collection:—"There is a strange conception flying across my mind of a man (a squire) lying at the bottom of a pit, out of which he cannot get, and dying of hunger, and at the same time seeing his wife in dalliance with a young clever little villain, who after-

wards dies, and is found, by the students who lift him, *turned* in his coffin. I shall also introduce a high-spirited, virtuous girl, who will not ‘fall,’ as Hood complains that all my women do, and a brother with equal or greater talent, but muscular and stern, a very devil in short; the little chap shall be Belial, and he, —I forget who,—but a coarse, unpolished, scheming, vulgar brute. I think it will take form, and work itself up into a very spirited, though lengthened tale—have you any suggestions on the subject?”

In another letter he writes —“I should like to have your opinion on the sketch of a tale I sent you, and on that of another, in this way:—A gentleman of very great beauty of face and figure enchants all society, and wins the heart of a beautiful woman, a lady who, for his good looks, rejected a man of talent to whom she was previously attached. On the marriage night she discovers her husband to be a leper, his whole body, save his face, hands, and feet, being one mass of hideous leprosy; of course there is the devil to pay, and they agree to live separately—what think you of the idea?”

In the latter end of February, 1843, the ‘Thunderer’ set sail for the Cape of Good Hope with troops.

During this voyage he touched at St. Helena, Rio Janeiro, Madeira, and the Isle of France. He writes:—"We left St. Simon's Bay for the Isle of France with the 12th regiment, and fetched away the 87th. It is a remarkable and very beautiful spot, but unhealthy; we lost two men in the five days we lay there, and five more on the way home. Dysentery is the particular charm of the place, and is sometimes so rife that sentinels at night have been known to drop dead with it at their posts, which I suppose is the origin of the name *dy*-sentry. The celebrated Peter Botte mountain is in this island; it is a high mountain, with a tremendous peak. Here also is the scenery of 'Paul and Virginia,' and their tombs are shown at the village of Pamplermouses—whether authentic or not, Heaven knows; I don't. I have written an article for Colburn about this island. I was also at St. Helena, and saw Bonaparte's grave, and picked up some anecdotes about him, which will also appear in the 'New Monthly.' "

He returned to England in September, 1843, and the 'Thunderer' having been paid off, he again went down to Glasgow to his friends, where he remained for three months. At the expiration of that time he was appointed to H. M. brig 'Crane,' and in March sailed

for the Brazils. He returned in September, having been absent six months, during which he had no opportunity of writing. However, before sailing, Mr. Colburn had sent him copies of all the numbers of the Magazines containing articles by him, for the purpose of revision, previously to their separate publication; and he amused himself by looking them over. With regard to some of them, he says, "I have been much amused by reading the early papers. The first I like very well; the second, though graphic, I don't like so well; the third, or 'Story of a Genius,' appears to me a strange piece of inequality; the idea is a noble one, and, if I had to work it out now, how differently would I finish it! I think when I get time I will hatch up some other idea of equal force, and embody it."

He was very much dissatisfied with the 'Crane,' and, for the first time in his life, he spoke of his health being impaired. He was anxious therefore to get into a coasting vessel, so that he might have an opportunity of being on shore occasionally. From Devonport, where he was staying, on the 11th of October, 1844, he writes—"Do you know that I am now getting quite an old man, frail and infirm, unable to stand the least draught of cold air, or wet feet, or exposure to

the weather of any kind. Since I left Scotland last I have not known what health properly is, and I am afraid I shall never again know that exuberant health and strength that I had when I used to go about your place ; I am full of pains in my joints from rheumatism while I write this letter.”

This was the last communication which his friends received, and although it indicated failing health, there was nothing to create any uneasiness, or prepare them for the grievous loss which they were shortly to sustain. It was evident, however, that his general health had received a serious, and, as it ultimately proved, a fatal shock, which no doubt tended to hurry on his end. About a fortnight after this he was appointed, as he had desired, to one of the coasting packets—H.M. steamer ‘Albion,’ so that he might have an opportunity of taking a run down to see his friends for a few days. While on board he was seized, on the 6th of November, with typhus fever, which, owing to the previously delicate state of his health, carried him off on the 12th, after six days’ illness.

Thus died Robert Douglas, at the early age of twenty-four, cut off in the bloom of youth, full of life and hope. Blest with a robust healthy constitution,

capable of enduring a more than ordinary amount of mental or physical toil, he had no cause to contemplate the nearness of such a contingency, but was rather looking forward to, and preparing for, a long and busy career of usefulness.

In the foregoing pages we have touched on the leading events of his life and the principal features of his character. Had the plan of this publication admitted, we might have done so at greater length, by the introduction of those letters which bore upon the narrative. But an author will be judged by his writings, and, though the effusions of twenty-one are seldom remarkable for depth of philosophy or greatness of design, there will be found in all of his an originality of conception, a breadth of observation, and a progressive improvement, which gave the most encouraging promise of future greatness. He loved literature for its own sake, and was an ardent admirer of the great minds whose genius has made it honourable; to rank among them was his greatest ambition, and to this end he had devoted his life. Neither was he averse to science—as a professional man he was deeply read in the best authors, much more so than in works of general literature.

In stature he was of the middle size, stout, robust, and always healthy. His complexion was dark, his features well formed, and his countenance animated with a pair of glowing black eyes, always beaming with mirth and good humour. His temper indeed was seldom ruffled, and his spirits often partook of the boisterousness of boyhood.

ADVENTURES

OF A

MEDICAL STUDENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADVENTURE OF A NIGHT.

IMAGINE a young man, possibly with an outward appearance of even boyish youth—give him powers and habits both of intense study and extreme dissipation,—manners displaying at once the refinement that education must always produce, and the coarseness of what I fear I must call libertinism; the look of conscious knowledge beyond others, as much of the recondite truths of science as of all the tricks and dodges of the town, an air of pride, likewise, and perhaps of poverty: clothe him in a pea-jacket, a rusty black stock, with no shirt visible, and trousers strapped down over his shoes. Then add a big stick,

and you will possess a tolerably correct notion of a medical student.

He studies, probably, at a school several hundred miles from his home. He is young, and his own master; at once, and for the first time, thrown on his own resources, and far from the advice or control of his friends. Dissection, by making him habitually familiar with all of mortal nature that men have been wont to hold in awe, renders him, in time, an utterly reckless and regardless being; while the temptations to sin, and numerous and powerful indeed they are, by which he is surrounded on all sides, can hardly fail to demoralize, for a time, a mind already so strongly predisposed to their influence. But if rakish conduct be excusable in any one, surely it is in him, considering that in a short year or two he settles into the quiet and strictly moral and exemplary medical practitioner.

I have known a young man of this class who frequently passed forty-eight hours of time at a spell without closing his eyes in sleep, and it was a matter of perfect indifference to him, as far as inclination went, whether he passed it in arduous study—possibly of a question in science that required the talent of a master to catch even a glimpse of—or spent it in the

pursuit of furious fun, roystering and devilment. Equally alert have I seen one at Chemistry and cricket, Physiology and football, Surgery and single-stick, milling and Materia Medica, Doctoring and drinking; these various accomplishments being diversified by the occasional effusion of a sonnet to *her* at home, or the insertion of an article in one of the magazines, with a view of raising a sovereign or two when cash was at ebb. Among this class the spirit of adventure and romance still lingers, ere she take her final flight from earth to heaven, before the advancing deluge of decency and matter of fact. Among them disguises and rope-ladders are not yet extinct, and assignations, encounters, and hairbreadth escapes are of nightly occurrence. But listen to this young fellow.

“I studied for a year at the University of Glasgow, in the north. A medical education is to be had there cheap enough, and of excellent quality. My friends, coming to be aware of these facts, packed me off thither, nor did I feel much inclination myself to revolt at the measure. It is a large town, very densely populated, and very wealthy withal, for manu-

facturing and trading, which have separately enriched separate cities, have here combined their resources, and in the factory districts of the city the female population is to the male as the proportion of five to one. When you take each and all of these points into due consideration, you will perceive that it is not at all a very repulsive place to a medical student. For my own part I dropped into the heart of a select circle of youths, a regular clique, equally prepared for whatever might turn up of an evening—hard study, oysters, larking, or love-making. We used to honour with our patronage a peculiar house of entertainment, where the senses were ravished with whiskey-punch, Scotch ale, and the notes of a horrible old spinet, dignified with the name of a piano. It was in that identical street where dwelt whilome Baillie Nicol Jarvie, of high historic fame.

From this classic haunt I emerged, one night, in company with a few others of the clique alluded to, and in a state of mental elevation which, I believe, it would puzzle a Transcendentalist to analyze or classify. My companions left me with the avowed intention of seeking their several homes—whether they did or not I am unable to say. For myself, I

expressed a purpose of a similar nature, and as soon as they were out of sight, diverged away through the dark streets of the sleeping city, without any precisely definable object in view, but determined to ramble along as chance should direct, and follow out the first thing in the way of adventure that might tumble up.

It was a fine mild night for the season, and as I staggered along, my thoughts got more and more *dreamy* and confused, and I speedily lost all idea of my whereabouts, at one time threading the windings of a lane, at another lost in the yawning depths of a close, or haply floundering among the foundations of a house in the progress of being built; now exchanging greetings with some lorn wight, zigzagging his way homeward, anon saluted by a grim-visaged guardian of the night, and reminded that though music hath charms, they are not generally held to be of the soporific kind. At length I emerged into a wide, open street which I found myself utterly unable to recognise. It was dark and lonely, the houses of stone, very lofty, rising dim, gray, and cold-like, with here and there a taper glimmering from a window, and the gas-lamps stretching away in two approximating lines, which became, to my bewildered

optics, confounded together in the distance. A few passengers were moving in different parts of it, their footsteps sounding hollow and distinct through the deserted thoroughfare, while here and there a watchman, with his will-o'-wisp lantern, lounged at a corner, or disappeared up an alley.

I stood bolt upright, steadying myself in the middle of the causeway, mustering all my wits to my aid in order to come to a correct idea as to my precise position on the chart. Presently I heard a clock chime, then the half-hour called, and after a while a distant rumbling sound. It increased louder and louder, nearer and nearer, when at once, ere I was aware, a carriage rushed furiously round a corner, and flying rapidly on, was all but over me as I stood. The wheels grazed my elbow, and it was past me in an instant. I cast a look after it as it went. Thereupon my mind flew homeward, and away back to the days of my childhood, and I minded how my little brother and I, when going to school, long ago, used to jump up behind coaches, carts, and vans, and get whirled along in beautiful style. A chaise may travel fast, but thought travels faster, and all this had passed through my mind ere the vehicle was gone

twenty feet from me. Acting from the impulse of the moment, I made a sudden bolt after it, by a sharp run caught hold of the springs, and with a bound swung myself up, and got seated very snugly upon the hind axle.

And a trick of this sort was just the thing which at that time I took delight in. I was about seventeen years of age, a very slight, agile little fellow, much slighter than I am now, and as active and alert as a cat, very fond of fun, and very careless how I came by it. I wore a kind of tight-fitting surtout of pilot cloth, single-breasted, and buttoning up to the chin, with no collar *for any one to hold on by*, and having in front, below the waist, two immense pockets, possessed of nooks and ramifications innumerable, the correct topography of which was known only to myself. In these I carried books, instruments, and sometimes other things not so easily named. Along with these a pair of shoes lacing on the instep, and a blue cap without lining of any description, formed altogether an equipment very suitable to the character of the wearer.

Away we rattled along the rough pavement, the sparks glancing from the stones as the wheels flew over them. The motion was most exhilarating, and I began

to feel perfectly happy in the excitement and novelty of the adventure. I watched the street lamps as they streamed away in a line, one after another, to the rear ; now and then a watchman or passenger caught my eye, standing to look at us while we were whirled away, and on the instant had left them far behind. Now I had no idea where we were going, nor did I much care—all I wished was that it might be some distance. Presently I got hold of a lucifer, and lighting a Cuba, was speedily in the seventh heaven of enjoyment. Still more and more swiftly flew the carriage ; twelve miles an hour I am sure was under the speed we were travelling at, and the more rapidly it flew the more rapidly I puffed, till the fag end of the cigar dropped from my mouth, and I looked about me. My head was anything but clear, I must confess ; but still I could make out that the town, with its gas, its stony pavement, and tall dark houses, had been left behind ; and while we were flying along a smooth Macadamized road I could see the great trees by its sides, like dim shadows, gliding away to the rear, as the moon looked through a big fleecy cloud, like a fair lady through a jalousied window.

I began now to feel a little anxiety. I had not the

slightest notion what road it was we were coursing along, or where it led to, or how I was to get back to my snug lodging, to be ready for lecture next morning. I began to ruminate, but still as I ruminated the vehicle was whirling me along, farther and farther into the dilemma. At last I came to the highly commendable and student-like resolution of leaving it all to luck, and yielding myself up altogether to the spirit of the adventure. When I had done so I felt marvellously comforted and once more at ease, while the delicious uncertainty of what was to befall me again took possession of my mind. I bent back as I sat, and holding on by the straps looked up to the sky, watching the clouds as they darkened over the face of the moon, and listening to the wind that was shaking the trees by the wayside, and rushing away with a winnowing sound up the heavens.

In a little I was sensible of a slackening in the pace, and immediately the vehicle stopped and a voice hallooed. I bent aside, and looked past its body. There was a turnpike-gate shut. The postboy hallooed again, and I could see a light moving about in the little gate-lodge. The window of the carriage was let down, and a voice spoke.

“How many miles to go now, Thomas?”

“Eleven of road, sir, and about a mile and a half of avenue.”

The other voice said something in an impatient tone, and the vehicle moved slightly upon its springs, as if the speaker was accompanying his grumbling with a corresponding shrug. Shortly the turnpike-man appeared with a lantern, and we dashed away along the road once more.

We might have gone a couple of miles when I felt the speed slacken again. I looked out and saw some horses standing before what I judged to be a little road-side inn, from the square sign-board that was swinging half across the way. Several men were lounging about with lanterns, while a bright stream of light issued from the open door of the house. I immediately dropped to the road, and walked along close by the hedge. The coach stopped before the inn, and while four fresh horses were being harnessed to it a girl emerged with some refreshments, which she presented to an elderly gentleman who sat in it. The postboys addressed him by the title of Doctor, but I could not say I had ever seen him before—at all events he was not one of the lecturing doctors at the schools.

Presently the word was given, "all right," and away they went. I had walked on a little way, and as soon as the carriage came past I chased it again, and jumping up, resumed my seat.

For more than an hour we rattled along with unabated velocity, when on a sudden we turned abruptly into another road, with a sharpness that all but unseated me, making the vehicle oscillate violently upon its straps. It was narrow, full of ruts, and overhung with immense dark trees; we jostled along this for a mile or two, up hill and down again, round angles, and over bridges, till we stopped before a very magnificent gateway, with a porter's lodge beside it—of Gothic architecture—a most princely entrance altogether. The large carved iron gates were thrown wide, the horses sprang forward, and through we went, the motion being so rapid and the darkness so great that the porter, busied with his keys, did not observe me shrinking in behind.

We were now on a smooth avenue, skirting an immense park, dotted with trees, with their branches sweeping down to the very grass, while I could see animals like deer, starting out from under them as we rattled past. On the other side of the avenue was a

close plantation of large trees, their stems surrounded by dense bushes.

I began now to entertain some serious misgivings about the issue of the affair.

"Here's a nice predicament to be caught in!" thought I; "what account could I give of myself now, or who would believe me? What will they do if they catch me? A precious scrape I have got myself into for no end nor purpose! This will never do, by Jove!"

And disengaging myself from my perch, I dropped to the ground, and fell aside among the bushes of the plantation, while the vehicle was speedily whirled away out of sight and hearing.

I sat me down upon a stone, and in solitude and darkness began with a heavy heart to bewail the absurdity of my situation.

"Here am I," quoth I to myself, "more than twenty miles from home, in the middle of the night, God knows where—and with how much? ah! let me see."

I began searching my pockets, and after a rigid scrutiny, made out the following inventory of their contents. A handkerchief—a little silver lancet-case, containing four of these lethal weapons—a small printed

note, from a kind uncle of mine, acknowledging my committal to his care of a Mackintosh—the bones of the hand of a skeleton, wrapped up in a piece of brown paper—a thin little book, entitled “Sparks from the wheel of a man wot grinds”—a fourpenny-piece, with a hole in it—a cheroot (right Manilla), broken in two by being sat upon—and a letter from *her*, and I kissed the paper, sweet Eliza Baster!

With a deep sigh, I restored these valuables to their former quarters, and giving scope to my imagination, began again to ponder upon the strangeness and folly of the adventure.

“All my comrades,” thought I, “are now snug in their beds, and here am I, cold and alone, where I have no business to be—never was before, and with help from Heaven, never will be again!—What’s to be done?—Shall I lay me down among the bushes till daylight, and then pad home, a score of long Scots miles, or what the d—l shall I do?—And then there’s that fellow to get a new nose at the hospital to-morrow, and I meandering cold and hungry about the country, all the while it’s being so nicely shaped out and stuck on. Oh, murder! isn’t it provoking?—Ha, hush!—what was that?” and I sprang to my feet in a panic of

alarm, the hair rising on my head, and my clothes feeling cold and rough upon my skin.

It was a sound as of some one moving stealthily among the bushes, close beside me, followed by a kind of tiny groan.

I listened attentively ; but all I could hear was the wind, with its sweeping rush, high over the treetops, and presently the bark of a dog, faint, and far, far away. It was most lonely, and the fumes of the liquor I had had overnight being now completely dissipated, I began to feel woefully desolate and at a loss.

I had once more fallen away into cogitation, when directly I heard again the sound that had formerly disturbed me. It was now plainer, and appeared to be a kind of sputtering among the brushwood, and again there was the small cheeping infantile cry. My curiosity was now fairly roused, and summoning up all the fortitude I could command, I moved towards the spot it came from—step by step—after looking round to make sure of a clear retreat, while, at the same time, my heart was going, thump, thump, against my ribs, every beat vibrating up to my throat.

Presently the moon shone out brightly for a moment, between two passing clouds, and by the aid of a

few beams, penetrating under the foliage, I was enabled to perceive a hare, caught by the leg in a snare of brass-wire, planted very nicely in the interstice between two thick bramble-bushes.

My eye—here was a discovery ! I paused a little, looking at the struggling animal.

“ What shall I do with it ? ” thought I.

I took the creature up, kicking and spurring, into my arms. As I did so, I felt its little heart beating, and its breath panting away, as my own had been a few minutes before. My first resolution was magnanimous.

“ I shall set it free,” said I. “ Go, poor wanderer of the wood and wild—liberty’s a glorious feast ! ”

“ So is hare-soup ! ” said a still, small voice within me ; not from my heart, I fear, but rather from the region of the stomach. “ And Nancy at the Hen and Hatchet can cook it like an angel—and then with this tail to it,” said I, in continuation, “ the adventure will bear telling ; they can hardly laugh with their mouths full of soup. Puss,” now I turned to the trembler in my arms, “ it’s all up with you—prepare for death—had you as many lives as your namesake, you should

die and be turned to soup;" and here I began to ponder how I should commit the murder.

Shifting the noose from its leg to its neck, I hauled tight, and waited to see it give up the ghost. But here certain rather unaccountable escapes I had had from drowning rose up in my mind, and a strange fellow-feeling possessed me.

"No, puss," said I, "you shall not be hung," and I groped in my pockets for a knife.

But as the reader is in possession of the inventory of their contents, he will at once be aware that such an instrument was not come-at-able. The lancets, however, obtruded themselves upon my hand, and I drew forth one of them from the case, and began digging about with it, sounding for poor puss's carotid artery. But as this mode of procedure seemed hardly more speedy or effectual than the former, I put the instrument into puss's medulla oblongata, at the back of her head, when she immediately stretched herself out, and certainly died game. And I forthwith stuffed her body into one of the capacious pockets of my surtout.

But judge of my dismay when at this moment I heard two voices whispering together, apparently not

many yards from my side. I stood rooted to the spot, and once more did absorbing terror take possession of me.

What was I to do now? Was it the poachers that had set the snare, or the keepers that were searching for it? What would be my fate in either case? For a moment my presence of mind and confidence in myself forsook me, and I gave myself up for lost; but the next instant they rallied, and I looked about for a way of escape.

I was close to the foot of a tree—reaching up my hand I touched a branch—it felt elastic, but secure. Catching hold of this I slowly and gradually swung myself up, till I got my chest, and then my leg, upon it, and immediately I felt myself safe once more. I climbed a branch or two higher into the tree, and waited, though with a beating heart, for whatever was coming.

I now heard as if the owners of the voices were moving slowly from place to place among the brushwood. There were intervals of silence, and then the whispering and talking would begin, and anon there was a sound of footsteps, picked slowly, and with groping among the bushes.

After shifting about, hither and thither, they at length came to the root of the tree right under where I sat. I could dimly discern two figures, one of them a very large man, and the other a boy. This fact was further certified by the voices; one being gruff and harsh, and with difficulty subdued to a whisper, the other childish and piping. I held my breath as the man stooped and groped about where I had caught the hare.

He searched for a little, and then apparently getting hold of the torn and disarranged snare, he gave vent to a broadside of oaths, which prefaced the following speech.

“What the —— has been to do here, Jerry—has this been a tod,* or a brock,† or a dog?”

“What ’s out now, father?” said the other.

“Why the girn ‡ I set here last night is all knocked to the devil”—here an oath or two—“I ’ll have to stay and set it up again—so off you go home with what you have got; and mind you go through the wood, and up by the hunter’s cairn—and don’t be sneaking away by the holm—and tell Madge to have the trouts fried for me—do you hear?”

* Fox.

† Badger.

‡ Noosed trap.

The boy went away, and as he went I thought I could see a dim something, like a large bundle, slung over his shoulder. The old chap continued to stoop—now humming a scrap of a tune, and now muttering an imprecation, as he appeared to be twisting the wires once more into a trap.

I was sitting perched above him, waiting with the utmost anxiety for his departure, and praying Heaven my situation was not as plain to him as his was to me, when I heard a distant whistle from the direction of the park. He started to his feet, and stood motionless.

The whistle was repeated; there was a pattering as of small feet scampering over the grass, a loud abrupt barking, rising into a fierce snarling yell, and a dog sprang at his throat. But immediately there was a sound as of a heavy body dashed violently against the stem of the tree—I felt the blow thrill up to the branch I sat on, and the dog lay a couple of paces off, with its back broken, writhing upon the grass, and howling and yelping with agony.

The whistle sounded once more, accompanied by a loud cry of “Here, Viper, Viper!” and presently came a noise of footsteps, rapidly hurrying up, then pressing through the brushwood beneath me.

A bright glare of light was now flashed upon the trapper, evidently from a dark lantern carried by the stranger, and I had a perfect view of him. He was about the middle height, with an exceedingly large, heavy body, and short, thick legs, a little bowed outwards. His chest was very broad—his arms long and extremely muscular. He had a short, bull neck, and a large broad face, with coarse features, and bushy, dark eyebrows and whiskers. His head was bald, the white shining crown contrasting strongly with the deep, burnt, brown hue of his face. He stood with his fists doubled up in an attitude of defence, one of them being raised to shield his eyes from the light. At his feet lay the plaited wire of the snare, and a heavy broad cap of blue worsted stuff that had fallen from his head.

“Have I caught you at last?” said the stranger.

“Yes, and you’ll find me nothing but a Tartar.”

“It’s no use—you must go down to the house.”

“If I do, you’ll have to carry me.”

And, laughing in defiance, he made a sudden kick with his foot, and dashed the lantern to the ground. I thought it was extinguished, but it was only broken; and the oil, escaping among the dry leaves, and

catching fire from the wick, immediately shot up a bright flame, throwing a red, unearthly sort of light on every object around for a few paces back—all beyond that being shrouded in a pall of thick darkness. The new comer, whom I could now see plainly, appeared from his dress to be an under-gamekeeper, or some such character. He was considerably taller than the other, very well made, and also an exceedingly powerful man. He had a gun in his hands, but it was evidently not loaded, for he held it clubwise, ready to strike down with the butt.

“Will you come quietly, or must I fetch you?” said he.

“Fetch and be —,” was the reply; and the poacher sprang at him. He raised the gun, and it would have descended with fearful force on his antagonist’s skull, but that it struck against the branch of the tree overhead, the very one by which I had swung myself up to my present position. The next instant both had grappled together, and a fierce struggle ensued, accompanied with curses, and hideous epithets applied to each other.

It was a most strange and terrific scene altogether. These two men of gigantic strength, locked in furious

strife, their faces giving expression to every mad passion, while the red flame from the broken lantern threw its ruddy phantasmagorial glare upon them, making them look like fiends contending amid a region of fire.

I watched them with fearful yet absorbing attention, with feelings of awe, dread, and overpowering curiosity, tumultuous and scarcely bearable. I marked their sweating brows and straining muscles as they struggled hither and thither, now one, now the other seeming to have the advantage. I hearkened to their labouring breath, to their oaths, and horrible threats and denunciations; while, to add to the wildness of the picture, the dog, broken-backed and powerless, lay wriggling about on the grass close by, its eyes gleaming with pain and rage, barking and yelling from out its foaming mouth, a fearful accompaniment to the conflict.

At once the gun, which appeared to be the immediate object of contention, flew from between them, and fell among the bushes a little to one side, while at the same moment a heavy blow was dealt upon the throat of the poacher, and he staggered back. It was but an instant, however, for the next he rushed upon

his opponent with renewed ferocity, and they were again joined in mutual strife.

“You banished my boy!” was ground out from the compressed lips of the trapper.

“Yes, and I’ll send you after the cub—if I don’t—” an oath completed the sentence.

A bitter laugh was the response, accompanied by a powerful wrench of the other’s body, that appeared almost to bend him double. He stood it out, however, and returned it by a second blow, dealt with his whole strength upon his opponent’s neck. But in the act of doing this, he had laid himself fearfully open to him. The poacher grasped him at once round the middle, and, twisting him like a sapling across his haunch, with a wild cry of triumph, leaped high into the air, and they fell heavily to the ground, the keeper undermost and he over him, with his knee sunk into his stomach.

“Now,” he cried out, “I’ll make an end of this,—you have been the curse of my life—I’ll be the finisher of yours.”

But the keeper shortly appeared to recover from the stunning effects of his fall, and, grappling at his throat, struggled violently.

I thought he would once have changed places with him, but the poacher maintained his advantage and kept him down. After a while, gasping for breath, he gave up the attempt.

“Let me up, Nathan,” he said, “I will let you go.”

A laugh of derision was the answer, as after several tremendous blows, knocked into his face, his adversary, while he held him down with one hand, thrust the other into a side-pocket, and drew forth a large clasp-knife. When the prostrate man saw this, he screamed aloud, and made another desperate attempt to dislodge him as he sat upon his chest, but without avail.

“Nathan — Nathan, don’t murder me, — have mercy !”

“What mercy had you on my son that you banished ? — eh, Judas, eh ?”

“Oh, Nathan ! spare my life—mind, when we were boys together !”

“Ay, and do you mind when we were men together ?”

“Yes, Nathan, I have been your ruin, I own it—but spare me in mercy—we are old men now—don’t take my life !”

“If I don’t, may God take mine ! Ours has been a lifelong quarrel, and only death can end it. Think on Alice Woodward now,—I would have made her an honest woman—you made her a ——”

Yes ! you may rob a man of all his possessions, and in time he will forget and forgive ; but come between him and her he loves, and he will pursue you to the grave. If one insult you, wound you, deprive you of your dearest friend, of your child even, your very firstborn, it is possible to pardon—to pray for him. But he has brought to ruin the woman your heart *loves*—her whom your fond youth idolized—who was the star of your hopes for this world and the next ! Can you forgive ?—is it in man’s erring nature ?

While the dialogue went on, they struggled much, the brawny poacher holding down his victim, partly by pressing his chest against his, and partly with his left hand, which grasped his throat. The knife he held in his right, making attempts to open it with his teeth, but desisting at intervals to utter the sentences above related. At length he got the blade partly open, when the keeper, by a desperate wrench, catching hold of his wrist, the spring went off, and with a loud snap the blade darted into its haft, making a

hideous slanting gash in his under-lip, half severing it from the lower jaw.

The warm blood spouted over their hands and faces, a kind of thin tiny vapour rising from it in the cold night-air. The wounded man tossed his head spasmodically back, and uttered a wild snorting groan of intense agony.

All this was shown me by the red, flickering, flaring light from the lantern, which was now beginning to die out. It was indeed a scene such as a man may be horrified with once in a lifetime. I looked down in a paroxysm of interest and wonder, curiosity and dread. I lost all consciousness of my own situation, and seemed to have become part and parcel of the deadly strife below. I kept craning forward, and stretching and twisting myself to get a complete view, when just as the poacher had, with both his hands, succeeded in opening the knife, and with a savage yell was waving it in the air prior to plunging it into the throat of his adversary, whose loud and despairing cry of "Murder!" was that moment piercing my ears, a small branch, to which in leaning forward I had committed my whole weight, snapped suddenly, and I was precipitated a height of ten feet right down upon

them, and we rolled over and over, extinguishing the flame of the lantern in the confusion.

And now ensued a scatter—a regular panic seemed to have possessed the combatants. As for myself, I can avow I never was in such a mania of fear in my life. In a moment we were on our legs, and flying like the wind in different directions. One—the poacher probably—rushed crushing and tearing through the bushes, and was lost among the trees; the other fled along the avenue; whilst I, putting trust in a pair of heels that had often saved my head, coursed away out through the park, I knew not whither.

I ran on and on, never looking behind till I was brought to a stand by a broad piece of water. I paused here, and stooping, bathed my hands and throbbing temples with the clear, cold element,—a proceeding by which I was mightily refreshed.

There was now a considerable degree of light, the moon shining freely out between two clouds. Looking round, I could see no living creature. I listened—was that the wind?—the southing of trees, or the distant rush of water? No; now it's over! Hark again! It is—yes, the noise of a carriage—it is, by

Heaven! and I could now hear the sound of wheels and horses' feet galloping over gravel. I sprang forward again, and ran in the direction of the sound. But presently it became fainter and less distinct. I am running from it!—where is it? I stood to listen, and again the murmur rose on the air. It is in this direction!—and I ran a little. No, it's the other way! Oh, how torturing was that feeling of uncertainty and suspense in the lonely park! I could have sat down and cried in very bitterness. At length came a breath of wind, bearing loudly and distinctly the sound. I ran against it with my utmost speed, and, in a minute or more, saw the moon shine on the bright yellow body of the chaise I had so strangely travelled by, and it appeared to be rapidly approaching me. A couple of minutes more, and I was seated securely in my former position on the hind axle, and we were out through the gate and careering along the road.

It was not long now, till, fagged and exhausted, I fell into a broken and dreamy slumber, from which I was only awakened by the hard jolting and rattling of the wheels over a pavement of stone, and found we

were travelling along the identical street that had so bothered my brains five or six hours before. This street, by the rapidly advancing light of the morning, I was now enabled to recognise, and leaving my seat, I hurried home, tumbled into bed for an hour or so, and then posted off to morning lecture.

The whole events of the night appeared like a wild and troubled dream, but there was palpable reality in the fact, that poor puss lay along stiff and cold, but not a bit the worse of that, in one of the unfathomable pockets of my pea-jacket. Nor was it a matter for scepticism that she served for a nice supper to a select few, to whom, over a tumbler of punch ('toddy,' as other legends sing), I took the liberty of relating the adventure.

But not the least curious point was, that never to this day could I form the least idea as to where I was that night,—who were the parties to whose duello I had so singularly put a finis, or who was the gentleman on whose carriage I had enjoyed such an eventful ride.

Whether the poacher and keeper ever met again to settle their difference, I know not—I should like to know, I confess. But there was one of my friends, a

serious, sedate, sanctified sort of genius,—Old Father Isaacson we used to call him, who told me that night I had merely been an instrument in the hand of Providence for the prevention of a great crime, viz., nothing less than *Murder* !

CHAPTER II



ROMANCE OF A WALK.

I WAS apprenticed to Dr. Weld, of Albanstoke, in one of the midland counties. He was surgeon to several extensive mines, and other public works, all within a circuit of five miles round the town. It was my duty to ride from one to the other twice every day, and see how our patients got on, the doctor himself visiting only those whose cases were of such importance as to demand his immediate skill and experience.

My morning rounds I generally got over before breakfast; and as I did not ride out for the evening visit till considerably after dinner, I had the whole mid-day to myself, to read or amuse myself as I thought proper, if there was not sufficient work in the surgery or laboratory. This was in summer; in winter we went the rounds but once a day.

I cannot conceive a greater intellectual treat than a solitary walk, in that season, through a beautiful country. It is a pleasure I have always sought, and always, when I obtained it, enjoyed. I am naturally inclined to solitude and air-castle building—though certainly not a melancholy character, by any means; and probably this may account for my strong propensity to rambling.

It is all the same to me, whether I wander along a green lane, with its high, dense hedges, from behind which come sounds of distant rustic merriment; trace the margin of a wide river, rolling majestically along in the sunlight, or of a bright limpid brook, dancing gaily from stone to stone, and singing to itself a fit roundelay the while; or whether I climb a heathery mountain-side, pausing often, and turning to look back upon the glorious landscape below, basking itself in the fervent noon-tide: then with a long glance at the blue and white heaven fixing my gaze on the sharp shepherd-built cairn, that shoots up like a spike from the far-off summit, and anon, with eyes bent to the earth, slowly picking my steps up the rocky acclivity. Nor is a walk by the sea-shore less a luxury, but it must be summer, and quite calm, not a little new-born wave

must kiss the white-pebbled beach, nor a breath of wind dimple old Ocean's cheek; and this is not from any dislike to the waves, for I have had my home upon them ere now, but I never was one that liked storms or storming of any kind; nor do I privately think there ever was a living soul, who, in any circumstances, admired a tempest (unless it be the one with Ariel and Miranda in it), however much they may have said or sung to that effect.

Amid such scenes, a walk in the morning is exhilarating, at noon rapturous, at twilight—or gloaming, as our Northern brothers and sisters more softly call it—delightful. For all this, I am not a pedestrian—not one of those who boast their so many miles in so few hours. My object is not to get over the ground, but to enjoy it. Miles are not my thought, but fields, flowers, cottages, sheep, cattle, and above all, woods and waters.

The pleasure of a walk is utterly spoilt by anything offering the remotest pretensions to the name of company. A book—pooh! Is not the book of Nature unfolded before you? A friend! Is not the bright sun smiling upon you—the best, the greatest, and certainly the warmest friend you ever had?

But a female friend, Mr. Student—ungallant vagabond!—How can you —?

Alas! I must persist, she does not merely spoil a right walk—she annihilates it altogether. It is no longer a walk at all—it is a tryst—an assignation. The most interesting part of the landscape to you is the ground she treads on; the blue heaven you worship is the one beaming in her eyes; and as for the prospect, that of an early wedding is the only one you are dreaming of.

Yes, fair Agnes C——! (Heaven bless your far northern home!)—will you permit me to breathe it? How often, gentle spoiler, have you thus been the ruin of my most promising walks? And yet there is no rule without exception—there is one companion, who, far from destroying, enhances a thousandfold the delights of a walk. One of the sweet sex too is she—heaven-born. Do you know her? It is the Muse!

There was one walk in the neighbourhood of Albans-stoke that was a peculiar favorite of mine. It was a narrow road, that had been formed in its day to communicate between the town and several mines. These had been long in disuse and shut up—grass growing over the dismantled buildings at their mouths—

may, flowers springing from out the rusty cylinders of the old ruined Newcomen engines. It branched abruptly from the high road, and not much frequented has been even that, since the opening of the Grand Something Railway. After you had passed one turn, all was silence and solitude. I have walked along it for hours without seeing a face—this was in the day-time though. In the evening it was quite another thing, for it rejoiced in the name of Lovers'-Lane. But as it was in the full life of the meridian sun that I mostly enjoyed it, I had it in general altogether to myself. It led along, in a sort of zigzag way, through fields and plantations for a mile or so, being flanked by tall, clustering hedges of eglantine that had not been clipped for several years, or by low, broad, turf walls, on which you could sit down, or loll most luxuriously.

At one place, however, it widened out into a triangular space of an acre or more. This was the mouth of an old mine, long ago stopped up and covered over, the heaps of rubbish being now converted into little knolls, clothed with a carpet of thick short sward, and plentifully besprinkled with daisies, buttercups, and other wild flowers, with clumps of field-rose bushes, filling up the angles. Here I used often to find a

couple of families of gipsies, that travelled the neighbourhood, encamped, with their shy, black-eyed little daughters, playing about, and stout boys hammering away at pots and kettles; the smoking caldron swinging over the fire in front, and the coarse tents of old canvass spread upon hoops of hogsheads, with, probably, a dirty drab-looking woman lying along in one of them, and a small covered cart, and quiet, sedate donkeys grazing beside it, filling up the background. Shortly after passing this, the road ascended—

—a gentle hill,
 Green, and of mild declivity, the last
 As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such,
 Save that there was no sea to lave its base,
 But a most living landscape, and the wave
 Of woods and corn-fields; * * *
 * * * * * The hill
 Was crowned with a peculiar diadem
 Of trees, in circular array, so fixed,
 Not by the sport of nature, but of man.

About the skirt of this diadem wound the road, descending on the other side a little more abruptly. The low soft wall bordered it here. After overtopping the hill, rounding on the way the peculiar cluster of trees that crested it, a most living landscape certainly opened to the view. The hill-side itself was verdant

with the grass of June, rounded as the bosom of youthful womanhood, and sloping away by imperceptible degrees into the rich plain, outspread below.

At its base flowed a broad, sluggish stream, approaching almost to the dignity of a river. You could see it winding away for miles through a rich meadowland, cultured like a garden; enclosing perchance in the embrace of one of its bendings a wide green wood—in the deep fold of another, a high-gabled, ivy-covered, old-fashioned farm-house, surrounded by tall, sheltering sycamores, or lime-trees, while the corn-fields stretched themselves out around it in wanton dalliance with the sun. This stream, just beneath, widened into a reservoir, the water from which passed through a sluice, and away round to a little mill, whose corner, topped with a populous dovecot, just peeped past the edge of the hill, round which its merry hum, floating to the ear, sang bass to the clear notes of the lark high chanting overhead, and the richer warblings of the blackbird and thrush from out the diadem of trees behind.

To the far left, again, its waters washed the base of a rock, covered with dense wood, from over the top-

most foliage of which rose the turrets and pinnacles of a ruined castle. Not far from this was spread a wide and noble park, stretching up from the water to the proud mansion of the high-born owner of all these domains. At a respectful distance to its rear, a modest and most beautiful hamlet showed itself from amid clustering trees, a prolongation of the wood that begirt the ruin, the windows glancing in the sun, and the blue smoke rising in vapoury wreaths from the narrow, quaint chimneys, of every sort of shape, that peeped out here and there among the foliage. From out a separate grove hard by, rose, tapering aloft, the slender, reed-like spire of the little village church, one of those sweet, rural, peaceful-looking ones which sweethearts like to have painted in their valentines. Far away in lay the little town of Albanstoke, a dim, hot, hazy vapour appearing in the distance to float over it. Beyond this, again, a circle of low hills bounded the prospect.

Imagine this landscape stretched out before you, in all its varied luxuriance of green, golden, brown, and soft aërial blue, and steeped in the glowing sunshine of ardent midsummer. Such was the scene, and such the season, in which one day at high noon I strolled along on

my solitary walk. The heat was great—almost overpowering, but not on that account unpleasant; it only made me move the slower.

I stood upon the highest part of the road, and gazed around me, feasting on the beauties of that magnificent picture. Close by the roadside stood a single tree—a noble sycamore. Amid its foliage, about half way up, the branches had grown into the semblance of a seat, and here it was my wont to recline, and look abroad from among the boughs. Some half a dozen paces from its root, a tiny spring of water, clear as its kindred air, bubbled out from underneath a broad flat stone embedded in the sod. With a long refreshing draught from this I climbed into the tree, and was soon lost in a world of bright imaginings.

I might have been there half an hour, when my eye was attracted to an individual slowly wending his way up the road. He would often stop and gaze over the fair prospect below, then turning, would resume his march up the hill side. At last he stopped, right under the tree, and seated himself on the low soft turf wall. There was nothing particular about the man; he seemed just a person of every-day life. He had certainly nothing aristocratic about him, nor, on the

contrary, any, the remotest, indication of poverty or low station in society. In short, he appeared to be a highly respectable man of the middle rank, and had that air of quiet dignity and independence so strongly characteristic of his class, and not to be found either above or below it. His features again were neither fine nor coarse—neither interesting nor devoid of expression. It was a face such as you would expect to see at dinner at your friend 'Thompson's:—an everyday countenance;—the features of an ordinary man of the world. His hat was a superior beaver, somewhat worn; his boots, though dusty, unimpeachable in themselves; his clothes black, made loose and easy; a plain gold chain, with a seal and key, hung from his waist, and he carried a brown silk umbrella, for though the weather was fine, the great white clouds, however beautiful to see, must to a prudent man have looked rather indicative of rain and rheumatism.

He sat a while on the wall, looking forth upon the prospect, then put his hand into his waistcoat, drew forth a small silver box, and took one or two pinches rather quickly. Shortly he lifted his hat, took from it a very rich silk handkerchief, and blew his nose; and this was done not as one at his ease would do it, but

with suddenness and impatience, as a man would in the theatre at the sight of a pathetic piece well played. He continued to sit, holding the snuff-box in one hand and the handkerchief in the other, gazing down upon the landscape smiling below. After a little he slowly crossed the low turf fence, came into the field, and sat down under the tree, close below where I was. The foliage shaded him from the sunbeams as he gazed with a long and absorbed look upon the glorious landscape I have so vainly attempted to describe. For lack of other amusement I watched him. After this fond, protracted view, he bent him forward with a deep sigh, which I could plainly hear, and covered his eyes with his handkerchief. What?—bless me!—the man is actually crying! This middle-aged, decent, respectable, matter-of-fact man is weeping—really weeping like a weak woman! I was amazed, and observed him intently. After this had continued a little, he began to rock his body from side to side, and sob bitterly. Then he paused, and looked out again at the prospect, frequently wiping his face the while. After he had gazed for some time, he gave way to another paroxysm of grief. Dropping the handkerchief, he clasped his hands, wrung them together, and,

groaning deeply, looked up to the sky, while I could see the tears actually streaming down his face. His hat fell off, but lay unheeded on the grass, and I remarked his dark hair slightly tinged with grey. His features had no expression in them of remorse or any kindred feeling, nothing but pure and passionate woe. He murmured now an expression, I almost dislike to write in a light paper like this. It was a simple "Oh God!" but in its sound, and the look that accompanied it, was shown forth a heart appealing for relief from overcharging agony of spirit.

I was now deeply moved. I could almost have cried myself: had it been a silly, sentimental-looking fellow, I would certainly have pelted him in derision, but his wailing seemed so sincere, so heartfelt and earnest, that I could not but commiserate with my whole heart. I began to surmise what could have excited in him such vivid emotion. Was it the exceeding beauty of the landscape? I have known people who might have shed a tear, or said they had, at the view of a romantic scene; but they were of quite a different description from him of whose bitter mourning I was now witness. Was it that fair stream? Perhaps he played along its banks in the sunny days of his childhood, and has

“wandered many a weary foot” since then! That hamlet so prettily nestling among the wood? It may be he was born there, and spent a joyous youth among the dear friends of that happy season in life—all scattered and gone now—some lost in distant lands, others on the homeless ocean, but most laid in the grave, long, long ago! There possibly he wandered with, and won the heart of, that fair being, fairer to him than all nature beside! To that little church, so sweetly rural, he may have led her, blooming in her bridal beauty! Haply in the little churchyard beneath these trees he laid her to sleep, cut from his bosom in her prime: and when he looked upward, may it not have been with the thoughts and feelings of him who sang to “Mary in Heaven”? Like Mr. Yorick with his captive, I could not sustain the picture my fancy had drawn. I looked down again. The violence of his passion had subsided. He sat with his cheek upon his palm, and his elbow supported by his knee, gazing fixedly upon the landscape. He remained in this position for several minutes, when a great cloud passing across the sun threw a deep, cold, deadening shade over it: he sighed deeply, slowly rose, and shook

himself. Then, going to the spring, he took a long draught, and unloosing his stock and opening his shirt collar, bathed his face freely with the clear cold water. Then dressing himself, he put on his hat, took up his umbrella, and went slowly away. When he came to the angle where the road bent round behind the "peculiar diadem" of trees, he turned and took a long lingering look. At that moment the sun shone forth again, and the landscape glowed once more in all its exceeding beauty. An instant, and he resumed his walk, moved round the corner, and was lost to my sight.

My curiosity was much excited. I should have liked to follow him at a distance, and see where he went, but I felt constrained to stay where I was for another hour. It would have been cruel to have given him cause to suspect that his grief had been profaned by the eye of a spectator.

From that hour the tree and the landscape acquired a new interest for me, and my other walks became comparatively little frequented. In a fit of whim I carved on the bark of the sycamore the name of "The tree of sorrow," and on the stone over the fountain,

these words ; “ The waters of Marah.” Often afterwards I drank of the water, and sat among the branches, but never more did I see that man, the deep workings of whose bosom had been so strangely displayed before me.

CHAPTER III.

MARIA GRACIAS.

As I was quitting the gateway of Guy's Hospital with a fellow-student, he commenced the following narrative respecting a patient whose case had been regarded by both of us with more than ordinary interest: "She was found sitting on a doorstep in a narrow alley, somewhere about the Seven Dials. It was considerably past midnight, and the sound of her moaning attracted the notice of the watchman, who had just returned to his beat, having been drawn away for some time by an alarm of fire in a neighbouring lane. When addressed, she continued her groans, in the intervals uttering some words unintelligible to the man, who, in the belief that she was drunk, had her conveyed to one of the police stations on a stretcher. Her condition being at once evident there, she was forthwith conducted to the hospital, and the matron sent to me to let me know it was my turn to have the case.

“ On entering the ward I perceived she was asleep, and, turning on the gas, I stood looking at her for several minutes, fixed to the spot. She was a most beautiful woman. Not even the wan and anxious look, nor the other peculiarities to be expected from her situation, could for one moment conceal even a trait of her extraordinary loveliness—and it was a style of beauty, too, I had not seen for many years.

“ She lay in a tranquil slumber, with her face turned toward me, and one arm laid over the bed-clothes. The clean cap which the nurse had hastily placed on her head was too large, and had come off; it now hung round her neck by the strings, partly confining her beautiful black hair, which, however, bursting forth above and below, wantoned in rich curled and wavy masses all over the pillow. Her eyes were closed, the large black pupils appearing in a soft shade through the thin, delicate lids, beneath which their glances of passion or feeling were now sleeping, while the long dark lashes mingled together like fringes of silken filaments. Her skin was soft and velvet-like, beautifully pale, a shade of brownish red on each round cheek, altering in richness of tint with every breath she drew. Her lips were of the finest cherry red, and were slightly parted, disclosing

an even row of teeth. Methought while I looked a faint smile played over them—yes, it was so. Alas, poor girl; her mind had travelled many a league, and was far away in her own sunny land!

“My eyes now wandered to the arm that lay on the counterpane. It was beautifully shaped; the hand was so particularly; it was small and plump, with long tapering fingers, and a tiny dimple over the knuckle at the root of each. The appearance of the hand and elbow at once made it plain to me that they had never been employed at any menial labour. Anon as I looked, a twitch passed over her face as if from internal pain; it passed off, and the same placid expression returned: it had disturbed her, however; and slowly and indolently she opened her eyes and gazed around her. There was in them at first an expression of surprise, then wonder and fear, as, travelling round the still, quiet ward, they at length rested upon me, as I stood leaning over the low iron bedstead, and hanging on with my arms to the cord over it.* By and by, recollection seemed to dawn

* In most hospitals there is a strong cord that hangs from a hook in the ceiling over each bed; it has a cross stick at the end of it, by grasping which the patient, if weak, is enabled more readily to change his position in bed, or even materially to alleviate the feeling of pain.

slowly and gradually upon her ; a feeling of where she was, and *why* she was there, seemed to come full upon her ; she turned to the wall, covered her face with her hand, and groaned aloud in very bitterness. Oh, the deep, low, prolonged ‘a-ah,’ that seemed as if drawn piecemeal from the inmost recesses of a crushed heart !

“ I was with her at intervals throughout the day and the following night, and next morning placed a beautiful infant in her bosom.

“ The short time she was in the hospital she had won her way into the hearts of the matron and nurse. At first they thought her stubborn, from her not answering their questions, but when they found that she understood no English, the sympathies of their womanly hearts were excited in a tenfold degree in favour of this poor daughter of the south, alone and unprotected in a land of strangers, and that too at a period of her being when friends and protection were most in need ; and again and again, to their oft-repeated little kindnesses, would the dulcet ‘*gracias*—*muchas gracias*’ of the beautiful Spanish woman float around in the full golden tones of her own magnificent language.

“ I was convinced of her country from the first, and began hammering up as much Spanish as three months in a counting-house at Seville had given me, with a view to find out something of her history. All my attempts, however, were fruitless. I seemed by my inquiries but to augment the mental agony she was evidently suffering, while the sweetness of temper with which she bore it so excited my compassion that at length I ceased to importune her. The day I was called to her I managed to ask her if she was not from Spain ?

“ ‘ Es verdad, señor.’

“ ‘ And what made you leave your home, my good girl ?’

“ She buried her face in the clothes, and sobbed as if her heart would break ; alas, poor thing, it was already broken !

“ When her child was laid beside her she became more calm, and smiled upon the little creature with a look of such forlorn affection, that I saw the tears rising in the eyes of the worthy Mrs. Bland ; and when she lavished upon it words of endearment in her own tongue, and pressed it fondly to her, upon my life I thought I had caught the infection.

“ During the two days she had been with us she had taken no food, refusing everything the kind-hearted nurse offered her, save some wine and water, with which she moistened her lips occasionally. I was a little troubled at this. I asked her why she did not eat: she made no reply, but covered her face and cried. I pressed some food upon her, announcing to her the simple fact that if she did not eat she would die.

“ ‘ Bueno, señor—nada deseo sino morir—I only want to die.’

“ ‘ Why, my poor thing, may I ask?’

“ ‘ O gran Dios!—Francisco ha me abandonado—Francisco has abandoned me!’

“ ‘ And who is Francisco?’—But my question was lost in the paroxysm of grief to which she gave way.

“ I waited for a while, and then told her that if she did not take food she could have no nourishment for her little daughter.

“ As soon as I could make her understand me, she appeared struck with some thought, and quietly took the food I offered her.

“ She was now getting on tolerably well, and I was flattering myself upon working out a speedy elucida-

tion of the mysteries with which I had been bothering my brains, when the second night after, I was called to the hospital, and found my interesting patient about to go from me for ever. Symptoms had occurred which I need not explain, and on my arrival I found she was sinking rapidly. Dr. A—— had been sent for, and was already there, doing all that mortal man could for her, but without avail. I told him her brief story. He was much moved.

“ I bent over her—she was murmuring something. I listened—she was praying.

“ ‘ O Maria Santissima!—mia hija—O Dios mio! —no la abandones jamas—Heavenly Father, be thou a father to my poor infant!’

“ A few minutes passed—what was that? I shuddered as I heard it—it was that fearful sound that tells us hope is gone.

“ She spoke again: ‘ Adios, feliz España!’ I listened attentively: ‘ Adios, Francisco—mî a—ma—do—Ad—i—!’

“ Oh, woman, woman, is his name the last sound on your living lips!—his, who has been your utter ruin in this world, and who, we pray Heaven, may not be your eternal condemnation in the next? Such is woman’s love!”

CHAPTER IV.

THE TREASURE.

My fellow-student and I were both dressers in the same ward at Guy's; we also lodged together. One evening I said to him,—

“ Well, I think that old fellow who lies in No. 7 (alluding to the number of his bed) is one of the most singular characters that ever came under my hands: what a wiry fellow he must have been once on a day; a regular Jack Sheppard; small, slight, and sinewy, and as active as a cat! What a curious square red night-cowl is that he sports! A rum sort of fellow, certainly. He has taken a great fancy to me; he says I am not so proud as the other students, and seems inclined to be communicative. It seems he has been in both the services, and you can't mention a

place or thing but he is sure to have something to say about it. I was much amused by an account he gave me the other day of touching for water at some wild place on the coast of Africa, and finding his way into a lodge of black freemasons, not one of whom had ever seen a white face before, except in a vision of Old Nick or Mumbo Jumbo."

"Why bless you, man, that is but a joke to what I have heard! He makes a regular confidant of me. It was only yesterday, when I had done dressing his limb, he began a long rigmarole, and as we had had no lecture from Addison, I pulled out my note-book, and filled up the space with a report of the story."

"Let's have it."

"Stop a moment. Oh, here it is. Now, as I read, fancy you hear him talking."

I then went on.

It was the time of the first American war. I was a small shaver then, you may believe; I played the triangle in the band of the —— regiment. My father was a lance-corporal in that corps, and a decent married man; very different in that particular from what his son turned out to be. Well, one autumn

evening we were lying encamped on Hounslow-heath, along with a Scotch regiment, Lord Reay's Fencibles, I think ; I remember it well, though everything thereabout is changed now. Very different times were those from the present. Highway robberies were as common about the heath as blackberries, and a murder or two occasionally lent an agreeable variety to the course of events. Now, while we lay on the heath, it came into the bandmaster's head that I would make an excellent drum-boy ; and consequently I, with two other small chaps like myself, were put under the care of a drummer, and sent out of hearing of the camp to acquire the noble science of which I believe he was an eminent master. Nothing pleased me better than this ; we used to go on the long sunny days, rattling away like blazes, and march up and down the country foraging upon the natives in the way of everything eatable, and entertaining them with a flourishing tattoo by way of reckoning.

One day we rambled far across the heath till we came to a place where there were a number of scattered clumps of trees ; but they have all been removed and the ground enclosed thirty years ago. However, at the time I speak of, there they were, and

a most lonely place it was : not a human face had we seen in an hour's wandering ; and the song of the lark, or the cawing of the rooks, was the only sound that interrupted the sweet music we were every now and then knocking out of the drum. Oh ! so well as I mind every mark of that spot, and the long, dreamy, warm day, and the bramble-berries, and the birds (one of us had a long pistol, and we had plenty of cartridges, which we had picked up when dropped by the men during inspection), and the lonely road that wound along at a little distance, without a living creature upon its surface : but everything is altered now. Well, we had roved about among these clumps of trees for a long while, and at last we came to where three or four magnificent beeches stood, nearly in a straight line, and as we began to feel a little hungry, it was thought that some beech-mast would be acceptable.

We stood at the foot of one of the trees—it was even and unbroken for a good way up, and then suddenly forked away into two sets of branches. Well, I made no more ado, but up into the tree I scrambled, while the others stood looking at me, till, as I was clambering into the fork of the branches, the mark I presented was too strong a temptation for the self-

denial of the drummer—a wild scoundrel—he was afterwards flogged and sent to Jamaica for stealing a cat-o'-nine-tails to whip a grocer with in Canterbury ; so he lets fly a big pebble, and hits me just right *here*. Now, though there was not much danger of broken bones in the blow, yet the pain and the loud laugh the young vagabonds set up enraged me so much that I immediately looked about for something with which to send back my love to them.

Standing then right in the division of the tree, my eye was caught by a hollow in the wood just in the fork where the two branches parted at my feet. It had apparently been produced by the weather, or by some disease in the timber, and was filled up with leaves, bits of bark, chips of wood, and several good heavy pebbles, which last were my immediate object. These I speedily sent buzzing about the ears of my friends below, who forthwith beat a hasty retreat. Yet I still continued to empty the hole, with a vague feeling of curiosity as to its depth, till, as I was taking out a copious handful of leaves and dust, something glittering attracted my eye. It was the clasp of a large, dark morocco pocket-book, the sides bulging out as if it were well filled, and the leather much frayed, appa-

rently from constant use. My curiosity and wonder were now stimulated to a most intense degree. I turned the pocket-book over, and beneath it found a glittering heap that made my heart jump with astonishment, delight, and a feeling of fear.

There lay a long purse of brown-netted stuff, secured by two massive rings of what I now know to have been tortoiseshell. One end of it was actually crammed with yellow guineas, shining brightly through the distended network, the other contained a few pieces of silver. Beside it lay a lady's bag-purse of green velvet, with little green tassels at the corners, and a heavy gold clasp. It also was well filled. Beside these lay a dark morocco spectacle-case, and beneath it I found two gold watches. One was a gentleman's, massive and plain, with a heavy chain, the links thick, clear, and unornamented, with a seal and key attached, larger, and very richly chased. The other was a lady's, a small and very beautiful French one, profusely set with glittering stones.

A pair of gold shoebuckles next caught my eye, then a pair of shirt-sleeve buttons—an old-fashioned thing to see nowadays; then a broad cameo brooch, two gorgeous bracelets, and a most magnificent pair of

pearl earrings, the *checks broken and bloody*, as if they had been torn violently from the ears they had ornamented. A silver thimble and a small plain gold snuff-box I passed over hurriedly, while my attention was riveted by the dazzling brilliancy of a diamond ring. From what I have since seen, I know that ring must have been of immense value: why, the stone actually lit up the bottom of the hole where it was laid! I have never, in all my adventures since, seen anything offering the most distant approach to it. Beside it lay a plain wedding-ring, which, being smaller, I slipped upon my finger, and there it remained.

Well, for hours I continued there, sitting in the tree, absorbed in the contemplation of my new-found treasure, handling the costly ornaments, and turning them over and over in a perfect dream of wonder and delight, till at length the darkening twilight warned me it was time to return to the camp.

The moment the thought struck me a feeling of apprehension took complete possession of my mind. What was I to do? How find my way home? I had never been so far away before—my companions had gone long before sunset, and no living thing had since come near me: it was now getting rapidly dark, and my

ideas of north, south, east, and west were utterly confounded. My fears deepened into absolute terror. What if the owners of this treasure should come prowling about in the night and find me ! But this was not all ; frightful stories, which I had heard from the boys in the Scotch regiment, crowded into my mind all about fairies, witches, and ghost-guarded treasures, till I was actually shuddering with horror. Hastily snatching some green leaves, I crammed them into the hole over the glittering store, and sliding down the tree, took to my heels and ran as if for dear life.

I continued running over the heath for more than an hour, till seeing a light, and hearing a dog bark far away to one side, I made in that direction, and leaping ditches and fences, came pretty near to the house where the light shone. I was afraid, however, to venture near, so I laid me down beside a haycock to sleep. I was so haunted, however, by my fearful thoughts, that not one wink could I get. Now I thought of my treasure, filling my brain with wild conjectures as to how it came there, and thinking over the Scotch boys' stories of lures laid to ensnare souls into the power of evil spirits, and such like ; then I trembled at the thought of my father's rage at me for being away all

night, and anon the vision of my fond mother rose before my mind, and I could see her agony, when, after waiting hour after hour for her only child, her dear spoilt boy, she heard the night-guard turn out, and there was no son to come jumping to her through the canvas door of the tent. I pictured her running about from place to place, through the camp, but I could bear it no longer, and I cried bitterly and long.

At length the morning broke, and I was overjoyed to recognise the farm-house. I knew it by three tall poplars before the door. I had been there often. I went to it; they were stirring, and knew me immediately. I warmed myself, for I was stiff and cold; they then gave me breakfast, and away I scampered home.

On my arrival, my mother covered me with endearments, and my father, taking a leather-strap from among his accoutrements, proceeded to divest me of my jacket. I resisted stoutly, with the help of my poor mother, when, in the struggle, what should catch my father's eye but the rich and massive ring upon my finger! This obtained me a hearing, which I was not slow to take advantage of, while my father listened to my story with astonishment and delight, and the result

was, that as soon as he could get away, he took his bayonet, and out we sallied to make sure of the treasure.

We wandered about all day, but notwithstanding my father's coaxing and threats, questions and suggestions, I could not for the life of me find out the way to that particular part of the heath, so that at night we returned as we went, my father insinuating doubts of the truth of my story, and hinting that an application of the strap would probably materially change the nature of the incidents. Next day, however, we were more successful. We found our way to a spot where I was at once enabled to recognise the various clumps of trees dispersed about, and the road winding its lonely length across the heath: this day, however, it was not so absolutely deserted as it had been on my former visit; a gang of gipsies were plodding their way slowly upon it, and while we stood, a horseman came in sight and galloped rapidly along.

The unfeigned delight visible in my countenance, at once convinced my father that there was truth in my account, and he desired me immediately to point out the particular tree. Now this was just the thing I was endeavouring to remember.

"Come along, father," said I, "I think I have it—these are beech-trees, arn't they?"

"Yes, boy—double quick!"

But as we went on we found the trees round about to be all beeches together; our mortification may be guessed—my father swore.

"There is a forked tree," said he.

"Yes, but that is a triple forked one."

"Well, then, there is another."

"Yes, but you see there is an old, thick, knarled one beside it; now the trees round the right one were all tall and straight, and smooth in the bark; and if that old one had been there, Joey Duckleg would have hid behind it when I threw the stones down."

We walked on again with heavy hearts, till once more my father stopped me.

"Yes, father, but there were no brambles round the foot of it, I remember that perfectly, nothing but bare sod."

Again we moved about among the trees, I crying with vexation and disappointment, and my father muttering to himself—when I thought I had caught it. I stopped, looked round. Here were a number of tall, straight beeches, without even an old thick one among

them, or brambles about their stems, and, bless me! one with a double fork—is it possible? No, there is a difference, and yet how like! I looked around once more.

“It is very like the place!” I was afraid to say it was it.

“It is—it is—it must be!” cried my father, a wild hope illuminating his eyes. “Up, boy—mount, sir—climb, up you go!”

Up I did go—my father watched me; at length I turned and looked down—blank enough.

“Is it there?” cried my father.

“No, there is no hole here, father,” said I, “the bark is quite sound.”

“Come down,” and he shot a volley of oaths at me. “Come down,” he shrieked—“down, I say.”

I was in mortal fear.

“Yes, father, if you won’t larrup me.”

He turned about, and walked swiftly and in silence towards the camp, I following at a few yards’ distance, very miserable.

Next day we remained in the camp, but that night my father dreamt he was to be hanged on a beech-tree, so that the day after we went forth again with

renewed hope. I am sure that day I climbed fifty forked trees, and others of all sorts, but with the same success. Day after day we tried it, but with every trial our hope diminished.

Well, about ten days after my adventure, two fellows, the worst characters in the regiment—fellows whose backs the doctor used to show as remarkable proofs of his healing powers—suddenly bought themselves out. Fellows they were who had never been worth a farthing, yet there were their discharges purchased by themselves! However, they were both hanged within three months for an extensive robbery of cattle in North Wales, and my father was firmly persuaded, not only that they had taken away *his* treasure, but also that they had put it where it was.

Shortly after this, our regiment was sent to America, where my father was taken prisoner, and sure enough was hung by the Yankees on a beech-tree, so that his dream proved to be prophetic after all.

CHAPTER V.



A STORY OF GALVANISM.

What is't ye do ?

A deed without a name.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE doctor turned his chair to the fire, placed his negus upon the mantelpiece, and laying his one leg over the other, began remarking the very great change that a year's study at the metropolitan schools had made in my appearance, and how manly and strong-looking I had grown since I left his quiet surgery down at Linnfield.

After a little desultory discourse in this way, "Ah," said he, "how different is a student's life now-a-days from when I walked old Guy's! Bless me, you have men lecturing now upon subjects that were not dreamt

of at that time; and then how commonplace has become every incident in your lives! None of the wild adventures—none of that mystery that used to make men tremble, while their eyes followed the young doctor as one who walked among the dying by day and among the dead by night—one to whom the lazareth and the charnelhouse were equally familiar,—who consorted fearlessly with the plague-stricken, and held unhallowed communion with the tenants of the grave. And then your studies themselves,—how dry and uninteresting are your medical sciences become now! Where is the romance that used to hang about chemistry, physiology, electricity, and the rest in my young days? There was poetry in philosophy then,—but it is gone, all dissipated now,—fled with the mighty names that were mingled with it, receiving and giving splendour,—the Hunters, Franklin, Watt, Lavoisier, Jenner—Well, well!”

Thus did the worthy old man run on, till I saw him warming into a story-telling humour. I put no obstacle in the way of this consummation, and in a minute or so, with a slight movement of his person, so as to compose himself into a narrative attitude, he began:—

I remember I had a fellow-student once, a most singular being; the name he went by was Elias Johns, spelling it with an H,—you may think from this that he was a Jew, and I could hardly help entertaining the same impression myself at first, but on knowing him better, I soon found out my mistake. Indeed, I never saw anything so absolutely un-Jewish as his appearance. He was a tall, very slender, and narrow-shouldered person, with a considerable stoop, and that too not directly forward, but somewhat away to one side. His hands were long, thin, and the whitest I ever saw on a man; his hair was of a very light flaxen, his eyes deep blue, and they had such an absent, wild, dreamy, mystic sort of an expression,—I can't find a proper word for it, but you can fancy, I suppose, what I mean. His features were sharp, thin, and as white as paper, but most decidedly intellectual. I never saw such a bloodless countenance,—even his lips hardly presented any relief to the unvarying pale of his complexion. His forehead was very expansive, and marked with many small wrinkles, and with his large light brows was perpetually twitching and moving about, as his thoughts appeared to change. He wore black gaiters and shoes, a suit of black and

a long black surtout over it, reaching down below the knees, a broad low hat, with a crape round it, and a slender ebony cane, with a small gold head. This last he used to carry under one arm, having generally a book under the other, and his hands clasped behind him, carrying either his gloves, a roll of MSS., or another volume. He used to walk about with long, rapid steps, having his eyes fixed, looking out right before him, his thin lips every now and then quivering as if he were talking internally. His manner was most winning and gentlemanlike; his voice rich and musical: in fact, his presence wherever he went commanded deep and immediate respect. And yet, though all the students admired, and some envied him, till he became acquainted with me he had no companion: they all loved to talk with him about the wards or lecture-rooms,—in fact he was the leading man among them, at all their scientific societies. Yet, apart from study, no one seemed disposed to consider him a desirable friend, and in consequence he was always to be seen alone, moving about as I have described him. His designation and talents were all that were known of him,—who were his connections, or where he stayed, no one ever knew or inquired, and

so little did they trouble themselves about him, that his name was always simply Jones, except when he wrote it himself.

But the place to see him was at one of the literary and scientific societies that were then so numerous among the students; there was he to be found propounding and arguing in favour of his visionary theories, carrying away even his opponents by the fervid and passionate eloquence with which he advocated their truth;—at one time dazzling them by a brilliant flood of the wildest poetry, anon cutting them by rapid thrusts of intellectual (he never stooped to personal) satire, and immediately building up fabrics of most intricate argumentation, of which though they might perceive, they could not point out or express the fallacy.

It was at one of these meetings that I first became acquainted with him. I had just done reading a paper proposing a theory to account for the motion of the fluid in the absorbent vessels (the anatomy and physiology of this system was then all the rage) and my ears were still tingling with the applause which followed, and which I could see he had been the first to raise, when he crossed the room, and watching an

opportunity while somebody was stating objections to my opinions, seated himself beside me, shook me warmly by the hand, and entered into a whispered conversation on the subject of my paper, twisting and turning my views, and proposing new ideas with a rapidity which astonished me, and yet all the while never losing one word of what the speaker was saying, for he had hardly ceased moving his lips when he sprang to his feet and entered into a complete and masterly refutation of all my opponent had uttered, taking up my views, resting them on a new basis of his own, and defending them with an originality and force that struck every one of the hundreds in the hall, with the most absorbing interest and attention. I was listening with astonishment and delight, when on a sudden, taking advantage of an ignorance the last speaker had betrayed of the sciences of hydrostatics and hydraulics, and errors consequent thereupon, he launched away into a current of the most cutting, yet delicate ridicule, till I could see the other's face rivalling his own in paleness.

We left the hall together, and walked to the end of the street, where he turned to take leave, observing that his way lay in a particular direction. I told him

it coincided with my own ; he appeared surprised, but took my arm instantly, and we moved on, and so completely charmed was I with his conversation, that I walked a good way beyond the door of my lodging before I was aware. Ever after that we were bosom friends. I was somewhat of a visionary then myself, till an early love-affair and a few up-hill struggles in life sobered me—ah ! (here the doctor sighed.) As we became more intimate, however, I began to be more fully alive to the singularities of his character.

He was, in short, a philosophical enthusiast,—science mad, if I might use the expression ; and his particular hallucination was electricity, with its collaterals, galvanism, and the sciences of heat and light. This was the root of all his theories and dreams, as it was the keystone to the splendid arch of his acquirements : to throw light upon this science, and to illustrate his views of it, he had studied almost all others. Astronomy, physics, mathematics, physiology, and, above all, chemistry. These he had studied in every sense of the word, if an ardent and enthusiastic devotion to a subject, and a day and night application, can be called study. Of the Latin and Greek languages,

he acquired an intimate, though not critical knowledge, by hunting through the works of the middle ages, puzzling his brains for real scientific truths, under the mythic dreams of the alchymists. As for the classics and the other sciences, besides his favourites, he used to consider them as follies fit for women and boys, and altogether unworthy of a moment's attention from a man who felt within him the workings of sterling talent. He had been considered a very dull boy,—he told me, in fact, he was fully ten years old before he could read a sentence of the English language; afterwards, however, he got on better; but when a medical education began to open up to him the field of philosophy, it was then that he showed what he was; from study to study, from science to science, he ran with a rapidity and power which appeared ominous. He seemed possessed of a universal genius. His eloquence I have never heard surpassed, while his power of expressing his thoughts in writing was most remarkable.

And yet the key to all this, without which it had never been, was the study of electricity. To this he sacrificed everything—in fact, I tremble while I say it now—he used to believe, to state openly, and to

use all his splendid powers to convert others to the belief that the electric fluid was the God of Nature,—that the human soul, and all other intelligences, were but modifications, but portions of this principle, and at death returned to it again. That it pervaded the universe, was the cause of all phenomena—the source of every change in matter—the creator of worlds, and the chain of systems.

Upon themes such as these he would dilate, with an eloquence which divested them of all their absurdity, and lent them an interest and fascination which made his hearers listen with delight, whilst they trembled almost at the stupendous thoughts he was calling up in their minds.

“Give me,” was a favourite sentence of his, “give me boundless space, matter in atoms, Electrical Attraction and Repulsion, and I will soon create you a universe!”

Religion he used to scout openly, with the most unblushing coolness, calling its votaries fools, and its ministers knaves—but I will go no further with this part of his character. The moral part of it was good, if I could say so of one holding and disseminating such opinions—for he worshipped his electrical deity

with such devotion, that he had no time to commit, or even to think of any other evil.

But, as in many others of this sort of visionary infidels, in him the emotions were most powerful and active. He was a most devoted friend, while his affection for his parents, and an only sister, was as remarkable almost as his love of science. When not occupied with his pursuits of the latter description, he was sure to be busy with his family correspondence, or enlarging to me upon the comforts or kindness he had experienced at home. Of his father he used to talk particularly.

He had been an eminent West-India merchant, but had been unfortunate, and was now living on the remnants of his fortune in a small cottage to the south of London, devoting his time to the rearing of flowers and breeding of singing-birds,—two arts in which he was celebrated among the ladies of the neighbourhood, from whom he sometimes received very considerable sums in return for choice specimens of either of those favourite objects.

“He wanted to make me a botanist, but it would not do; I was incorrigible. What is botany when you know the physiology of it? Stuff! A long

catalogue of names! Talk of the beauty of flowers! I never could see it—but I can see beauty in the Atomic Theory. But what of that? he loves me dearly, and I shall make him a proud and happy man some day! And then there's my mother, dear old soul; and Kate, too; would you believe it, she actually taught me my letters, though she is two years my junior. She is a dear, kind girl; look what warm gloves she sent me up!"

Thus would he run on to me whenever any accident set him off the current of his usual discourse; or he would give me little anecdotes of his father, or his sister, instancing traits of their characters, which, however uninteresting of themselves, were rendered even amusing by his graphic and original way of narrating them, and by the almost childish warmth and affection they showed in every sentence.

As we continued daily to get more intimate, our rooms became common property; sometimes I passed the night at the one, sometimes at the other, and he was as often at my lodgings as at his own. It was then I first was made aware of the degree of intellectual labour of which a man is capable when under the influence of a powerful motive. I almost thought

he could do without sleep at all. At midnight I would leave him at his study-table amid a heap of volumes, labouring away at calculations of the deepest and most intricate description, and in the morning on awaking, I would see him busily engaged with his tools, constructing electrical and galvanic apparatus. A favourite notion of his was, that Gravitation and Electrical Attraction were one and the same force, and that if he could find means to extract the fluid from any body, it would no longer gravitate.

Now this, however preposterous it seems in the present state of knowledge, was at that time not at all such an improbable matter. To work out this, and a hundred other similar schemes, his rooms were completely crowded—nay, jammed with apparatus. There never was an experiment related in any of the journals, but he must repeat it, and apply its consequences to his own theories: and, while in one corner of his chambers you would see a sand-bath and chemical furnace, in another you would observe a brittle collection of Leyden jars, voltaic piles, glass cylinders, globes, plates, &c.; in a third a heap of manuscripts; and in a fourth a number of preparations of the brain and nervous system hung in spirits.

He took food as he did sleep, by snatches, quick and hurried, reading as he ate, when alone ; when with me, indulging in those wild philosophical rhapsodies which I have before alluded to, or attacking and running down the opinions of men who were then about equal with himself, though their names have become now common words in the language.

When I began to see the incessant labour he underwent, I ceased to be so much astonished as I had been at the extent of his acquirements. The short intervals of sleep he took were the only moments of time in which he was not employed in adding to the heap. Even when he walked about, he was continually calculating or scheming ; and when his mind was exhausted by four or five hours' study of one subject, it seemed to be refreshed to its original power by change to another science.

To support all this, and provide the expensive materials of which his apparatus was constructed, as well as the very costly labour of instrument-makers, of whom he had one almost constantly employed, must have required funds far greater than I could have conceived a man of broken fortune, such as he described his father, capable of supplying. As we had

nothing but in common, I made bold once to express my curiosity on this point.

“Ah,” said he, “I don’t know how he gets it, poor man; these commercial matters are above my comprehension—I had always other things to think of. I dare say they are enough put about at home to keep up my education; but in a month or two, when I have completed and brought out my voltaic engine, they shall know what gratitude is.”

We had now been on these terms of intimacy for about six months, when one afternoon, coming hurriedly into his apartments, I saw conversing with him a tall athletic-looking man, whose back was towards me. He turned quickly round when I entered, looked at me, and then, with a gesture of annoyance, walked away to the chemical furnace, which was burning briskly, and began warming his hands.

Johns came up to me, coloured deeply, and told me it was his father, who had come to him with some money. He was not fond of strangers, he told me, and begged I would excuse him for once, he would be over to me to supper that evening. I immediately took my leave, not a little piqued at this; but in the

evening he came to my apartments, and in a few minutes we were on the same terms as before.

About a month after this, I had occasion to go down to Linnfield, and was returning to London very late on a Sunday night. As I was riding along, I heard a quick gallop behind me. The horseman came up, and as he was passing, his horse, a powerful gray, ran abruptly against mine, while the rider caught my bridle. My heart beat quick.

“Bless me,” said he, “what ails the jade? Ah! how do you do, Mr. ———? who expected to meet with you on the road? If it had not been for your bridle-rein, I should have been down. How is Elias, pray? working as hard as ever?” and he went on talking away with the utmost kindness and affability.

I was struck at this change in his manner, and attributed it to an explanation his son had given him of my character. As it was, I felt quite relieved to find it was he; for I was really in fear, as robberies were exceedingly frequent on the roads about town at that time. I mentioned this to him.

“Yes, yes,” said he; “a man that has occasion to be riding out of an evening, can never be sufficiently

on his guard. They have come across me once or twice, but I always managed to come off the best, thanks to Miss Polly here, and myself. If I could rid me of lawful robbers as easily, it would be better for me—I should not be here to-night.”

As we rode to town, he gave me an invitation to visit him, along with his son, at his cottage, and spend a week or two, if I could spare it. I accepted it with pleasure, and parted with him at his inn-door, fully convinced of the folly of forming an opinion of a person from a first impression.

Next day I told Mr. Johns of this, and he was much pleased. He told me his father had been with him just before, and had left for Bristol on business. “I must see,” said he, “if I cannot spare time, and we will go down together, and see Kate. You shall like her, I promise you ;—she ’s just nineteen, and as like me as my picture. My father is dark,—very dark, you know ; but we take after our mother.”

As we went on with our studies, his singular genius and application had become known to our lecturers, and he had become a frequent guest at their tables. Papers of his had appeared in several of the leading scientific journals ; and it was stated, that the highest

academic honours awaited him, upon his obtaining his degree, and terminating, nominally, his education.

Dr. Q——, especially, the distinguished chemist, took particular and very flattering notice of him, and often visited him at his rooms, examining his apparatus, looking at his experiments, and listening to his schemes—nay, in a short time, I was convinced he had become a convert to his electrical hypotheses.

In the mean time the summer wore on, and the time arrived when we should visit the cottage. Johns was loth to leave his studies, to which he had been bound for many years; but I was imperative, and with a heavy heart he locked up his apartments, and taking with him materials enough for a half-year's study to an ordinary mind, left for a fortnight's absence from his regular pursuits.

The cottage was a most beautiful one—a little more than twelve miles from London. It had originally been a porter's lodge to a nobleman's seat in the neighbourhood; a new road, however, having been run across the country, new enclosures were made, and, as the little place was much too pretty to be destroyed, it underwent some alterations, and being offered for lease, found a ready tenant in Mr. Johns.

The road which led to it was very lonely, and quite overgrown with grass. The cottage itself stood sheltered and hid, among a plantation of tall trees, and a large garden sloped away southward, before its woodbine-clad front.

If I had been struck with the beauty of it, I was a thousand times more so with that of one of its occupants—the fair Katherine. Her brother had hardly told me right, that she was his very picture. The same intellectual features had she, but none of the wrinkles of thought; the same deep blue eye, but no wild look of enthusiasm; the same pale, white complexion, but on her cheek the sunny tinge of health. Her figure slender—yes, and there was a stoop, too—yet, oh how feminine and graceful! and when she chose to erect that proud neck, and bent upon you the full glance of that noble eye, it was no sight to look upon and escape scatheless. And did I escape?—God knows!

[Here he paused, and appeared much moved. I sat quietly beside him as if I perceived nothing unusual. In a minute he went on again—]

I am an old man, now, Mr. —, and these things happened many, many years ago, when I was young

like you, so you may fancy with your young feelings the love I felt for that girl. My friendship for her brother seemed molten into love for her; it became burning as his ardour for science—yes, more so, if that were possible.

The three weeks I was with her flew like three days—the three happy days of a lifetime. I begged hard of Elias for a week longer; but he was inexorable, so we packed up, and returned to town once more.

[He paused again for a moment or two, looking thoughtfully at the fire—slowly he turned to me.]

I believe, Charles, there is an instinct that tells a man when he is beloved. Let her do all she can to conceal it; nay, let her hide it from all—from the sister that sleeps in her bosom—even the mother, whose anxious eye is on her every motion, and would read her every thought; let her do this—HIS eye perceives it. Yes, ere her fond heart itself is conscious of the beam that warms it, he has seen, and been gladdened by its dawning.

It was a feeling of this nature that spoke within me, as I left behind the beautiful dwelling, and told me that my image formed the centre of a radiant dream of hope and joy in that pure mind—that I was the

cause why the pent-up breathing heaved higher the snowheap of that gentle bosom. Alas the day—the day!

[Here he covered his face with his hand, bent his body forward, and remained motionless. A moment, and I heard a drop fall upon the knee of his trousers—I watched it, it sparkled in the light for an instant, like a small diamond, and then sunk absorbed into the cloth. I was deeply, almost painfully affected.

Under the influence of this feeling, I moved suddenly in my chair. Thereupon one of the fire-irons was shaken from its place, and fell with a loud crashing rattle upon the fender. This most prosaic occurrence brought him back from his dream; he gave a deep breath, like one relieved from a weight, took up the utensil, stirred the fire briskly, and then, passing his palm over his bald head, went on talking.]

The short time I was at the cottage I employed to the best advantage; I became a prime favourite with Mr. Johns the elder. I admired his flowers, which were certainly very magnificent, and proved myself to have not quite such a distaste for practical botany as his son. With his birds, again, I made myself no less intimate, and actually taught his

favourite starling to sing one of the little birds' choruses in the *Ornithes* of Aristophanes, a thing which pleased him mightily. Himself I found to be a plain, but very intelligent man, though of a kind of bold, scornful manner, and with an unpleasant propensity to strengthen every opinion with a bet. From this I thought I could guess the origin of his ill success in business. Personally he was what is commonly called a fine-looking man, in fact, only two-and-twenty years older than his son. His features were not unlike those of the latter in general cast, but wanted the intellectual look, so characteristic, and were dark, heavier, and more decided; his hair was black as coal.

The mother was a slight, pale, white-haired, delicate woman, with a face most singularly expressive of anxiety. She never smiled, but sat for long periods in thoughtful silence, broken only by an occasional shudder that ran through her frame, apparently from palsy. A habit that she had, too, of clasping her hands abruptly, and turning her eyes upward, made me think her son right in ascribing her peculiarity of manner to heightened or erroneous views of religion. The only other inmates of the cottage were a strong,

stupid young country girl, who had been sent them from the parish workhouse as a household drudge, and a very fine, powerful mastiff, that went at large about the premises. Miss Polly, the gray mare, was at the time under the care of a neighbouring farrier.

Mr. Johns parted with me, expressing much regret we could not prolong our stay with him. With her I parted with a look. As we rode along, Elias asked me my opinion of his father from what I had seen of him. I acknowledge I had never seen fatherly love more strongly shown, and only wished my own were half so affectionate. I then repeated to him the expressions of pride and admiration his father had used to me in conversation with regard to him. He was much excited.

“Yes,” said he, “though we are poor in outward things, and a poor and fallen family we are, yet in the sterling wealth of warm affection, no Arab’s dream ever equalled our riches.”

We returned to our studies. My own powers of application I found wofully diminished since my visit to the cottage—I could not settle myself seriously to a night’s hard reading—every five minutes my eyes were off my books, and my mind far away—where,

you may well know. Not so was it with my friend Elias. He confined himself almost entirely to his rooms. The hospitals he neglected—lectures he ceased to attend at all.

“Really, George,” said he to me, “I begin to think it must be a much easier thing to deliver one of these lectures, than to listen to one.”

The only times he stirred out, were when he went to the bookseller’s—to the fields to procure frogs for his experiments, or to the market for rabbits for similar purposes. With Dr. Q—— he was now on terms of the closest confidence, a connexion of which he was very and justly proud. In the mean time, his ignorance of everything in the public or political world was extreme. Of the meaning of the two great party names, I am sure he was quite unaware; and that, too, though political changes of immense importance were daily progressing. I remember with what words of bitter contempt he used to talk of names that were striking Europe with apprehension; what a smile he used to put on, as I would endeavour to call his attention to them.

“Hark ye, George,” said he to me one day, when I was talking to him in this manner, “say no more about

your victories, and such sort of things ; in a short while you shall see a victory over prejudice and error—a victory that shall send down *my* name with honour to a posterity, that shall receive the names of your blood-shedding heroes with execration.”

In a day or two after, I came to him to borrow a German book upon the brain, that was then making a considerable noise. He gave it me immediately.

“ This man,” said he, “ shows plainly there is something in him ; but how wofully does he come short of the truth ! Look what a rigmarole—I have marked it out in pencil—about the function of the cerebellum ! Nonsense—nonsense ! Have men no eyes ? The function of that organ is motion, or will, for they are the same thing—nothing but motion : it is just a galvanic battery, the plates of it are as plain as those of the pile on the table there : and yet these blind beetles go guessing about, afraid as it were to come at once upon the fact. Give me down that preparation ; look here, can anything be plainer ?—but to give you further proof—”

Here he caught a live rabbit, from a number he had under the window-sill, secured it, and, taking his instruments, elevated with much dexterity the back part

of its cranium, so as to expose the organ alluded to. He then took a wire, and touching it in different parts, by that means made the animal move in various directions, as I desired.

I was struck with wonder and delight, and clasped his hand, saying, "Johns, you are a genius!"

He gave one of his peculiar smiles, and remained for several minutes motionless, apparently lost in thought.

"Yes," said he; "you are astonished at this experiment, but you shall soon see one that will almost make you perform that fools' act which they call worship—an act which, ere I die, I will blot out from among the follies of men."

Alas, poor fellow!

I then gathered from him, that Dr. Q—— and himself were constructing together an electric apparatus of unprecedented magnitude, with which certain experiments of a most stupendous nature were to be performed.

"Now then," said he, "if I could just get together a hundred pounds more, I should have half the right of ownership to the apparatus, and be enabled to use it at my own pleasure. I shall write

home, and implore my father to get it me, by any means."

Two days after, his father called upon us, and presented him with the money.

Elias was now overjoyed; he appeared completely possessed, passing his whole time either in his own apartments or at Dr. Q ——'s house, which was just in the neighbourhood.

For my own part, I went on with my studies as well as I could, thinking more of the lovely Katherine than of her strange and enthusiastic brother.

One evening, as I was sitting musing over my books, he came in; I had not seen him in my rooms for a month, so engrossed had he been with his new pursuit. I had never before observed him in such a state of pleasurable excitement as he was in that evening. Hardly ever before had his conversation been of a more singular and unearthly character; he could not rest, he moved about from one part of the room to another, whilst his eye burned with a wild enthusiasm. I was surprised, and when he had become more settled, inquired what had so moved him.

"To-morrow, George, our experiments begin. There are four men to be hung at the ——" (here he men-

tioned one of the places of public execution). “Dr. Q—— has been and secured for our theatre the most muscular subject—it is one Bill Severn, a notorious scoundrel as ever lived. The doctor was going to tell me a long story about his crimes, but what did I care? all I asked was whether he was a suitable subject, and the answer was—‘None could be more so;’ that was enough for me. A curious thing, isn’t it, that upon the body of that man, probably one of the most atrocious villains that ever disgraced his nature, will be built discoveries that will make the world ring with admiration, nay, tremble with awe?”

I may mention here, that at that time capital punishments were a hundred times more frequent than they are now. Criminals were executed then for offences that would now be expiated by infinitely minor punishments, though from the state of society, and the want of a proper police, crimes themselves were much more numerous, and of a more aggravated description. The common rule, too, was to give the bodies of those who met their death by public execution, to the anatomical schools; a practice that is, I believe, now rightly abolished.

On his departure, which was pretty late, I endea-

voured to study, but could not ; it seemed as if he had infected me with a portion of his excitement. I felt uneasy and racked, I could not compose myself to serious thought, and a peculiar kind of ominous feeling crept over me.

I went to sleep, for I had had little the night before, having been out with a case. I slept, but all night long the nightmare sat upon my chest, and when I awoke in the morning, it was only by freely dashing my temples with cold water that I could bring myself to my usual state of mind.

Early in the day Elias came to me ; he appeared fagged and exhausted ; in fact, he had been up all the night previous with Dr. Q——, getting into order the apparatus for their experiments. He sat down to wait till I dressed, and took a book, but immediately falling forward on the table, slept deeply.

In about an hour I awakened him, when he started up, quite refreshed and vigorous ; all his former spirits had returned, and he continued to converse with me in his usual strain.

We went out together, and walked along to the anatomical theatre. As we went, we could hear little knots of people talking together about the executions

that were that day to take place—my ear caught frequently the name “Severn.”

“That is our man,” said Johns; “what a talk is made about him! Suppose now Dr. ———” (and he mentioned a very distinguished natural philosopher) “were to die—a martyr to science even—how many would know of it? And this is fame, George, that we are all working so hard for!”

We stopped at the corner of a street where two ballad-singers were bawling to a crowd of attentive listeners. They were exceedingly coarse, deformed-looking men, and they drawled out their song to a long melancholy tune.

It gave an account of a number of robberies and housebreakings, and a murder, I think, of a turnkey, which it detailed in the first person, beginning,

Oh,—William Severn is my name—in London I d—i—d
dw—e—ll.

And then it had a doleful chorus, which yet rings in my ears—

Oh, I robb’d the rich, and I did be—stow,
And give to them as vos poor and l—o—w,
But now I’m catch’d, and cast to die
On the new drop at—the Old B—ai—lye.

Johns laughed, and gave the men some coppers. They touched their hats, and ceased singing, regarding us with a suspicious look as we moved away in the direction of the Medical Buildings.

Dr. X——'s anatomical theatre—I don't know whether or not it yet stands—was a very fine, large, square hall. You entered it from the wide stair on the outside, near the ceiling, and on looking down into it, could perceive a semicircular area, or open space, from which the seats rose, tier above tier, till the heads of those in the highest touched the cornice. Two stairs led down among the seats to this area. In it stood a long square table of mahogany bound and clasped with brass. It had a number of hinges and foldings, and swung round in all directions, upon a ball-and-socket joint in its pedestal.

The roof, which was very lofty, was lighted by four great windows of dimmed glass, and from it were suspended, by cords passing through the crown of the skull, four or five large skeletons, which swung slowly round upon their ropes, as if surveying with their dark, hollow, eyeless sockets, the various members of the assemblage. Behind the area was a recess, sup-

ported on two pillars of marble, and with a door at each side leading into the other anatomical rooms.

Partly in this recess, and partly on the leaden floor of the area, were placed the various portions of an immense galvanic apparatus ; the plates, I am sure, were above a foot square each, and two or three hundred in number. On the table was a small box of a dark polished wood, mounted in silver, and containing dissecting instruments. There was yet no one in the open space, but the whole seated part was crowded up to the very ceiling, though none were admitted but gentlemen who had received cards of invitation.

As we entered at the top, all eyes were turned to us, and immediately the hollow seats resounded with a burst of applause. Johns, in whose honour, I need hardly say, this was done, pressed my arm. I looked at him ; there was on his pale intellectual face a flush of pride and enthusiasm, while his deep blue eye seemed to burn. We found our way down to a side-seat, the first from the area, which had been kept for us, and sat down to await the coming scene. As I sat, I could not help admiring the magnitude as well as

elegance of the apparatus, as it stood before me. I think it was the largest that has ever been constructed ; indeed, when it was set in action, several gentlemen afterwards declared they had felt its influence on their bodies, though seated at a considerable distance, and altogether unconnected with it.

After a while, several elderly gentlemen entered by one of the doors into the area, one of them enveloped completely in a gown of black-glazed leather : this was Dr. Z——, the demonstrator of anatomy. Dr. Q——, who was among them, came over to Mr. Johns, and entered into conversation.

About ten minutes elapsed, when a young man came in suddenly, and whispered to Dr. Z——. They were all immediately on the alert ; the acid was poured on, the apparatus put in action, and ere we were aware, one of the gentlemen was thrown to the floor by a violent shock from the wires having accidentally got entangled about his person. Things were put to rights, and, in another minute, several men hurried into the room, bearing a body, with a sheet thrown loosely around it. Thereupon arose a loud murmur throughout the crowded hall, and every one sprang to his feet, shifting about, and pushing aside

his neighbours' heads and shoulders to get a good view. The men who had borne in the body placed it face downwards on the long table, with the feet towards us, and the head towards the other side of the hall. They then removed the sheet and withdrew; and there lay before me Severn, the housebreaker, highwayman, and murderer.

I have never seen a more muscular frame than he presented. Every fibre was in a state of rigid tension, displaying the strength and elegance of his form to most striking advantage. The hair of the head was of an iron-gray colour, in some places almost white.

Dr. Z—— took out his scalpels, and Dr. Q——, crossing to Johns, told him that the neck appeared not to have sustained any perceptible injury, owing perhaps to the strength of its muscles. Johns was delighted. He took hold of Q——'s hand between his own, and looked at him with features full of anxious hope, lighted up every now and then with the wild unearthly expression so peculiar to them.

Dr. Q—— then went forward and addressed the assemblage, telling them that the body had been suspended by the neck for one hour, and had now been nearly half that time cut down, and was of course

quite dead. He spoke in a hurried, excited manner. He would now, he said, proceed to try upon it the powers of his battery, in the hope of restoring to it pulsation, respiration, and motion.

“Yes, LIFE!” said Johns to me. “Vitality—intelligence—mind! Yes, that corpse which for this hour has been dead and cold, as a clod of the valley, shall, in ten minutes, walk forth from this hall a LIVING SOUL! I shall be the power that shall have put the breath of life into its nostrils. I shall be proclaimed before this meeting—before London, England, the world, as the first being that has ever——.” I shall not go on—it was a sentence of most hideous blasphemy.

As he spoke his eyes gleamed with an enthusiasm almost maniacal. It was the last flash of his wayward but magnificent intellect; the last irradiation of a spirit that gave all but sensible indication of its presence.

Dr. Z—— now proceeded to make incisions down upon important nerves in various parts of the body. The wires were then applied. The body slowly drew up its lower limb—I saw the muscles clubbed up in knots under the skin. The next moment it was

thrown out with fearful violence, and fell back motionless upon the table. Thereupon arose from every part of that great hall a thunder of applause.

The excitement was now most intense ; for my own part, I could not take my eyes from the table. I had forgotten there was such a being as Johns at my side, so engrossed was I with the scene before me.

The wires were now applied to different parts of the body, violent convulsive motions of various kinds being produced. They were applied to the nerves of the head and face. The head was immediately drawn spasmodically back, the face looking right up from the table upon the benches opposite to me. I could not of course see it, but of the gentlemen who *did see it*, several rose abruptly, and fled up the stairs, and out of the theatre ; one vomited, and another fainted away, and was immediately removed through the area to the rooms adjoining. The galvanic fluid was then brought to bear upon the phrenic or nerve of respiration ; breathing immediately began, at first low, then natural, then hurried, labouring, at last gasping.

The wire from the one pole of the apparatus was now affixed to the large nerve that runs down the

thigh behind ; that from the other, to the one that comes out upon the bone over the orbit. The effect was terrific. The corpse suddenly turned completely round, with its face upward, and rose upon its haunches, every muscle being fixed in rigid spasm. Heaven keep me from ever beholding such a sight again ! Its neck was thrust forward, its long gray hair stood on end, its brow was contorted into innumerable wrinkles, the eyelids were drawn forcibly back, the eyeballs with their dead glazed pupils protruding in a hideous stare, its nostrils were widely dilated, while a horrible greenish foam oozed out at the corners of its working lips. I could not remove my eyes from it for one fraction of a second. Never, before or since, has my whole soul been absorbed by such a feeling of unutterable horror !

A moment, and it suddenly raised its right arm, and pointed convulsively with its forefinger to Johns, who sat beside me ; whilst its ghastly, lifeless eyes glared in the same direction, and every fibre of its face was twitched with a most diabolic, gibbering grin.

I felt sick and faint ; the theatre swam around me, but at that instant my ears were cut to the quick by

a cry. With the sights and sounds of the operation-room I have been familiar, but never has my heart quailed at such a scream. I had at first the idea that it rose from the corpse on the table, but the next instant a heavy body fell against my shoulder. A dreadful idea shot across my mind! that cry came from Johns, and in its prolonged, splitting yell, *my ear* could trace the articulate words—

“MY FATHER!”

In the utterance of it, he had sprung up clean into the air, as the stag is said to do when the bullet enters its heart. It was his body that fell against my shoulder, and he was now lying at my feet.

Yes; *it was* his father! Severn the robber, and Johns the flower and bird fancier, were one and the same. The man who had at first avoided me; who had seized my bridle at midnight on the highway; whose guest I had been for three happy weeks; whose daughter was the subject of my reveries by day, and of my dreams by night; the kind, doting father of my gifted friend; the ruined merchant, the highwayman, the burglar, the murderer, all were one man, and his insensate body now lay before me, the

writhing subject of hideous experiments. I knew the features well; but the *gray hair*! could the black have been but an artificial disguise? or was this the effect of the agony of sleepless night in the condemned cell?

But alas for thee, vain and presumptuous mortal! where is now thy proud and blasphemous spirit, thy mighty genius that could dare attempt by spells of earthly science to call back to its mangled tenement of clay the guilty soul already trembling before the throne of its Judge? How fearfully has thy deep sin been visited upon thee, poor frail child of clay! Has not thy very crime been, by the finger that works unseen, turned into the instrument of thy dreadful chastisement? Where canst thou hide thee now, poor stricken worm? Where are thy theories now, thy scoffs and arguings that led away many a weak spirit into eternal ruin?

No ear but mine appeared to have understood that cry. It was the belief of all that he had fainted away, as had the other gentlemen, from fright or agitation. I took him up in my arms, and bore his light, slender form from the theatre.

The gentlemen went on with their experiments,—

with what success I know not ; of course their object, viz., restoration of life to the body (for, whatever Dr. Q—— or others may have recorded, that I know *was* their object), was not attained ; neither do I know what became of the body afterwards.

I sent the porter of the rooms for a hackney-coach, in which, with his assistance, I placed my senseless friend, and then getting in, desired the coachman to drive to his apartments. They were situated in a quiet street down in Westminster. A widow lady, from whom he held them, occupied, with her servant-girl, the ground-floor and kitchen below : all above was his. I left him in the carriage, and running up to the door, opened it with a key I had received from him long before. I went rapidly along the passage, to seek the landlady's assistance, when, on opening the door, who should I see sitting in the centre of the room, all pale and dishevelled, but his gentle sister, my own Katherine ! I started back in new amazement. She rose slowly to her feet, and addressed me slowly, and with difficulty, while I could see the sweat, in drops like pin-points, starting out all over her beautiful face.

“Don't speak to me, Mr. ——,” she said. “I have

found out what I am ;—whose—child I—am. Where is my brother ?” She continued to move her lips, though uttering no sound ; the *globus hystericus* had risen in her throat, and was choking her ; her eyes swam in their sockets, she reeled and fell backwards, and it was with the greatest difficulty I prevented her from falling with her head upon the fire.

Never was I in a state of such painful perplexity. I knew not what to do ; imprinting a hurried kiss on her cold, damp cheek, I put her under the charge of the landlady, and ran out to attend to her brother. With the help of the coachman, I had him conveyed up stairs to bed. Oh, with what bitterness did I now look upon the piles of books and apparatus that impeded our steps at every turn !—the very bed had to be cleared of them, ere we could put him into it. Having dismissed the man, I endeavoured to ascertain the precise nature of his symptoms.

His pulse I found to be very slow and calm, more so by much than natural, as likewise was his breathing ; his skin was very cool, but not cold ; his limbs were slightly stiff ; if I lifted his arm, it would remain up for a moment, and then slowly sink again to the level position upon the bed. I found his pupils *not* to

be affected by the sudden approach of light, and from his nostrils were distilling a few drops of blood, which last symptom might, however, have been occasioned by his fall.

Having satisfied myself that he was in a fit of catalepsy, or some anomalous nervous affection, I went down stairs to see what had become of *her*. I found her in a deep sleep on the sofa, with the good landlady sitting on a chair beside her, who motioned me not to come in. I went into her bedroom, where she immediately joined me. She told me that the poor young lady had been raving dreadfully, and must have escaped from her keepers the night before, as she said she had walked that morning more than a dozen miles to London. It was the worthy woman's firm persuasion that the gentle girl was deranged; she had consequently kept her in talk, as she said, with considerable doubt about her own safety, expecting that Mr. Johns would come home, and take her under his own charge, and have her put under her former restraint.

I do not think I ever passed a day in all my life pregnant with events of such a harrowing nature. I fervently pray Heaven I may never have to pass

such another. I sat by the bedside all that night, watching my friend's pale, moveless, expressionless face, and thinking over the startling events I have narrated. I did this till a strange superstitious feeling crept over me; I was certain the glaring face of the galvanised corpse was behind my head, while an irresistible desire, and yet mortal dread, to look round possessed me; this feeling increased to torture; I could bear it no longer, but rushing from the apartment and out of the house, I walked up and down the street in front till day, and then re-entered. I ascended to his bedroom; I found Katherine sitting beside his head. She rose up as I came in, and, I assure you, I trembled as I greeted her.

She stood up quiet and calm before me. Her features had acquired a cold, stony-hard look; a Siddons-sort of expression, only real, not acted, that told me the bitterness of grief—of death itself—was already past. I knew that now, though I were to thrust a knife into her flesh, she would shed no tear, utter no cry. My eyes sought the floor before her passionless gaze. I felt for her that peculiar feeling of reverence and awe which the old Greek tragedians so well describe as hanging about the presence of Orestes,

Œdipus, and others, whom the gods had visited with extreme affliction. My clothes felt cold and rough upon my skin as I heard her. She addressed me in the style of ordinary conversation, but slowly, and with effort.

“I see, Mr. —, you know all. He has turned out to be a most atrocious felon whom I regarded as *a father*. I never knew it till two days ago. My mother told me with her latest breath; she is dead now; she had known it all along. But my brother, —my poor, dear, noble Elias,—thought him a deity. Yes, we have been reared upon the wages of crime! It came upon me like lightning; I ran out of the house as I was, and found my way on foot to London. When I arrived, I was borne away by crowds of people till I came to *the place*. Yes, Mr. —, with my own eyes I saw it—I saw the great dark prison, the black beams of the gibbet—I saw HIM! I heard the shouts and execrations that rose, an audible cloud, from the great sea of human beings that rolled hither and thither beneath. I heard him speak—I heard the rumbling crash of the hideous engine, and the one universal groan that burst from the vast multitude at the offering up of the horrible sacrifice! I heard

and saw it all; and my God! my God! I did not die!”

Here she bent her head upon her senseless brother's bosom, and continued in that attitude. I paced the room slowly in a state of mental agony, second only to her own.

After a time she rose. Her eyes were quite dry, her features unchanged. She intended to stay and be her brother's nurse, and desired I would not injure my prospects by neglect of my studies on his or her account, or bring disgrace upon myself, or wound my own feelings, by keeping company with such characters as I had found them to be.

I left her for a time, and went and addressed myself to my medical pursuits, endeavouring to attend to the usual routine, though I thought for several days I felt my reason giving way under the trials to which it had been subjected.

I came continually twice or thrice a day to the house, and often sat alone reading by the brother's bedside at night, to let her get a few hours' rest.

He had now lain in the state I have described for many days, when one night I sat beside him copying out some short-hand notes. It was soon after

midnight, and I had desisted for a moment from my writing, and was watching his face as it lay pale and cold in the light of my reading-lamp. A variety of thoughts were rapidly chasing each other through my mind, when suddenly I thought I saw his eyelids quiver. I rose in an instant to my feet, and stood over him, trembling with suspense. Gradually he opened his eyes, and turned his face round to me. His features slowly relaxed into a wan smile.

“Oh,” said he, in a difficult whisper, “are you there, George?” He coughed. “Bless me, how weak I am! Have I been ill? what has been the matter, pray?”

“You have been ill, my dear Johns, very, very ill indeed,” said I, my heart was so full.

“I have, have I? What was it, eh? A fit, I suppose, for I have no recollection of it. How unfortunate! I must be up to X——’s Theatre *to-morrow*. Has Q—— called? Send him here the moment he comes.”

“I think,” he continued again, “I must have been dreaming latterly. Could you guess what it was about?”

I expressed my inability.

“I dreamt *there was a God*, George.”

I was thunderstruck, and continued silent ; he went on—

“ I have some singular doubts now about that point. It looks not so impossible to me now as it did. Will you oblige me by going to my laboratory, and bringing me a glass of solution of permuriate of mercury, and another of the volatile alkali ? ”

I did so.

“ Now,” said he, “ would not one, from the analogy of every other experiment man has made, expect that on pouring these together, the *red oxyde* of mercury would be separated and thrown down, and yet you see, when you come actually to perform the experiment,” (I did so,) “ you find, that in direct contravention of every known chemical law, a *white substance* is formed, of which no man has yet explained the nature. Now, suppose I believe myself, and teach others, that, according to every known fact in science, there can be no such thing as a Supreme Being,—but, upon coming to the last and only conclusive experiment, *death*, we find, when too late, that there is a white, unexplainable precipitate, in place of a regular scientific red one—that there is an avenging God, in place of a system of Nature.”

I was much struck by this singular and most original

sort of argument, so much in accordance with the usual strain of all he thought, said, and did. I knew not rightly what to think. Was this but what is vulgarly styled "a lighting up before death," or was it the first symptom of a return to health and vigour of mind and body?

He lay for a while still and silent.

"I say," said he to me, "there is a breath of cold air blowing upon my left foot, will you just cover it rightly with the clothes?"

"Why, man, your feet are both quite covered and warm."

"Are they?—why then," he shuddered slightly, "it is—it must be—I am going to have another fit—it's the *aura*, George, the *aura*."* He trembled very

* The *Aura Epileptica*, vulgarly called "the Warning," a peculiar feeling, which indicates to those afflicted with epilepsy and other nervous disorders, when a fit is about to come on. Every different patient has one of a different kind; sometimes it appears like an insect creeping along the skin towards the head; sometimes a breath of cold air, as in the tale; sometimes a wave of water; and in such instances, it generally begins from a finger or toe, and moves up the limb, rapidly or slowly, as the case may be. When the latter, it is often stopped and the fit actually prevented, by binding a ligature tightly round the limb, so as to *catch it*, as the patients say. But these are not the only forms it puts on. Some have it of a startling, or even terrific description,

much. "How strange! it is moving up my leg—give me your hand, dear George." He clasped it violently. "It is on my thigh now, rising over my body, my breast, my neck, my ——"

Here a strong convulsion passed over his features, wrenching them into an expression of unendurable agony, presenting a most striking resemblance to the face of his father's corpse on that frightful day in the Anatomical Theatre. The next instant the grasp on my hand was relaxed, and he was gone to his account. The last experiment was made, but he could never return to tell its result.

I closed his eyes, and composed his features as well as I could, and then went down stairs to the landlady's parlour, where I sat till morning. I was sitting musing by the fire when the bell rang from the death-chamber. I started, though it was broad daylight, and as I ascended the stair, almost expected to find him sitting up and speaking—so different was he in every respect

as a flash of lightning, or the appearance of a rock falling on their heads; or of an abyss suddenly yawning in the pavement. I knew one gentleman to whom it appeared as a dark, indistinct, armed figure, which moved rapidly before his eyes, launching a javelin at him as it passed, when immediately the fit caught him.

from ordinary men. On entering, I perceived Miss Johns standing by the bed. She looked at me with the same stony gaze, as I stood with the handle of the door in my hand.

“He is changed,” said she.

“He is dead, Miss Johns.”

“Then God be merciful to him!”

“Amen.”

“Leave me, Mr. —, leave me.” I hastily withdrew, as the poor bereaved girl seated herself beside her brother’s body, with the look of one on whose brow the thunderbolt had descended, to whom fate had done its worst, who had no more to fear or wish for now.

I went home to my own rooms.

Next day I received a note stating her wish that I should attend her brother’s funeral on a particular day. I flew to the house, but the worthy landlady informed me she had shut herself up along with the body and could see no one. I retired.

The funeral, which was nearly the most humble and private one I was ever concerned in, was hardly over when I sought her once more. Oh how I loved that poor distracted girl! how I longed to take her to my

heart, and hide all her disgraces and afflictions in my bosom—her, the fair and spotless child of the robber and murderer—the gem taken from the hilt of a dagger!

That interview shall never pass from my memory. I was deeply affected; she preserved the same cold, soulless manner she had shown from the first. Alas, my heart! How different from the light feminine grace, the gentle simplicity, and innocent warmth and cheerfulness, with which she shed light and love around her, as she moved, a happy and most bewitching woman, among the flowers and singing-birds of her father's garden,—herself a blind to divert suspicion, a hundred times more effectual than his active cunning could have ever expected even them to be. Her beauty still remained, but it was become like that of a marble Niobe, cold, heartless, and blasted!

We talked together for a considerable time. At length, in a frenzy of passion, I fell before her as she sat, and confessed to her the absorbing love that had shut out from my mind every other affection. I would do or suffer anything—go with her anywhere—labour for her bread, if I were but made happy in the heaven of her presence. What was it to me that her father

was a felon? what did that detract from her bright mental and bodily beauty? I would have taken her from the foot of the gibbet, and made her the wife of my bosom in the eyes of all men.

She answered me with the same stoical tone and expression, "It can never be, Mr. ———; your wife can never be Severn's daughter. I believe all you say is truth, for I feel it myself. Yes, if it be any satisfaction to you to know it, I have loved you fervently and truly, and never mortal, out of my own family, but yourself; and that with a love, growing from the first day I saw you led into my presence, blushing and distant, by my noble brother, who is in his grave. He loved you much, but never as I did—as I *do*, George, even now, while I sit here a seared and broken-hearted being. It is not womanlike to tell you so; but I have been tried as never woman was, and everything about me is changed now, nothing of old is left but my love for you."

As she talked, she sat, calm, and devoid of all apparent emotion. A mother giving advice to a young boy, is the only thing, that, to my mind, comes near to her manner. She gave me a long tress of her fair hair, and another of Elias's—then severed a lock from

my temple, and, stooping forward, kissed my lips. I actually recoiled as she did this, so unmoved and statue-like she seemed. She rose and slowly withdrew. I never saw her face in life again.

On going to the house next day I found she had left it; not even the landlady was aware of her silent departure, but could hardly be convinced she was really gone. Everything of Mr. Johns's effects she had left untouched, and of these his creditors forthwith took possession.

I made every inquiry regarding the life of Severn that I could, without unduly attracting notice. I found that the robbery for which he was taken, was the very one by which he had supplied his son with the money necessary to complete his Galvanic apparatus. It had been committed upon a naval officer, a very active, determined man, who, trusting to his speed of foot, for which he was celebrated, had, after delivering up his money and valuables, suddenly drawn his sword, and hamstrung the gray horse, to the strength and speed of which, and its facility of disguise, its owner had so often owed escape from pursuit and from detection. After this he had managed to keep always about fifty yards distance between him and the robber, as he was

a very slight person, and a very child, compared to his powerful adversary,—following when he went on, stopping when he stopped, and running when he chased. In this way he never lost sight of him till he had him secured in the streets of London, next morning, twenty miles distant from the spot where the crime was committed.

In the mean time I made a vow of bachelorhood; but when we make vows in early life, we little know what it is we are doing. I kept it, however, for twenty years, when I married my present lady, your old mistress, Charles; but, alas! it is not years, nor an eternity, that shall efface the *bitter* love which a former period of my life had burnt into my heart.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WIDOW'S CHILD.

IN one of the great manufacturing cities of our country, a firm does business by the name of the "Westwater Spinning Company." This name is derived from a beautiful stream more than twenty miles distant, on the banks of which stands a very extensive factory. About two thousand persons depend upon this factory for their bread, and as its site has been selected with a view to water-power for machinery, it and the hamlet attached are most picturesquely placed, and far from other towns or villages of any magnitude. The inhabitants of Westwater form a class by themselves,—disliked by the country people, and not over fond of them in return, and are divided into lesser sets, according to the nature of their labour, and

the parts of the buildings in which they are employed.

The benevolent proprietors of the works have taken every measure to secure the well-being of their work-people. Their houses are comfortable, are kept in constant repair, and have each a small garden attached; while a couple of large fields have been thrown together into a park for their recreation. On this, of a summer evening, after work is done, you may see a hundred or so of the male population merrily engaged at cricket and football, sports for excellence in which they are famous, while among the trees, at the sides and angles, bands of young girls lie chatting and laughing upon the grass, or run about chasing each other in frolic. Others again walk about, either in the park or on the banks of the clear Westwater, along whose winding and very beautiful margin, foot-paths extend for miles. But while their bodily health has been thus attended to, their mental profit has not been forgotten. A church and a library, which is also a reading-room, form part of the buildings, and, from the opened windows of an edifice, apart from the rest, you may hear issuing a hum of little voices, telling that the work of instruction is busily going on. The

greatest man in the place is, of course, the manager, whose large white house you see just before entering the little town. This situation was held for many years by my father—and here I was born, and received the first rudiments of my education.

When I attended the school—decidedly the prettiest little lass in it was a small creature called Jane Granton, pronounced in the dialect of the place Jeeny, or more often Cheeny. She was a yellow-haired, rosy-cheeked little thing, exceedingly healthy, good-humoured and merry, and was the only child of a widow who kept a kind of small green-grocery shop in the village. This widow was a very goodlooking woman,—indeed, it was a common saying to the little girl, from the grown-up people, that, pretty as she was, she would never be like her mother. She had the reputation of being a very religious person, and was the only one in the place that, from scruples of conscience, refused to attend the services at the church. Indeed, her whole conduct appeared dashed with a strong and very remarkable tincture of superstitious fanaticism; though under what particular sect or denomination it might be classed I have not been able to determine. This peculiarity, as well as her general clean, tidy

habits, sobriety of demeanour, good looks, and obstinate persistence in the state of widowhood, attracted to her much respect, and to her little child, the attention and kindness of every one in the place. Among the boys at the school, again, little Cheeny was a regular toast: many bloody battles were fought and won, upon various pretences and provocations, all of which, however, were privately known to every one, to be merely in her honour and glory. For a long while I believed myself to be the prime favourite; but whether this was owing to my own particular personal charms, or to the superior dress and equipment of the manager's boy, I am not prepared to say. But the time came round when I should leave the factory and its beautiful environs, to be transported to a large boarding-school, where the place of the widow's child in my mind was speedily usurped by other charmers. From that school I was removed, four years after, and apprenticed to a medical gentleman for three years more. Upon the completion of my time, I returned, a grown and serious young man, for a month or two's residence with my father; and if I was changed myself, I certainly found Cheeny much more so.

She was now about seventeen years of age, and just

passing from the slender reedlike grace of girlhood, to the full voluptuous development of face and form, of eye and gait, of smile and attitude, characteristic of perfect and beautiful woman. I saw her walking lightly along from work, among a group of other girls, as I was riding into the town, and was struck in a moment by her exceeding beauty ; and not till I saw her turn into the little shop, did the thought enter my mind that to this perfection could have sprung my former pretty schoolmate, little Cheeny Granton. I dismounted and entered just behind her, and addressing the widow, whose staid, yet comely and cheerful countenance now bore palpable traces of the lapse of time, called myself to her recollection, and we entered into conversation with regard to various occurrences that had taken place since I left. I may mention, to account for my long absence from Westwater, that just before I was sent to school, my father, who was a widower, had entered into a second marriage with the daughter of Mr. H——, one of the proprietors, a connexion which ultimately procured for him a partnership, though it was the cause of a very great change in my habits and prospects. While I was talking with her mother, Jane stood by with a

sort of quiet, unconcerned look. I addressed her, and she answered me frankly, but, though she spoke in kindness and good-humour, I at once saw that our former liking, if it had ever existed, was not likely to be renewed. I talked with her for a little, and then, leaving the place, rode on to the works. Yet, though my love for her and for many others had all finally merged into one permanent and sensible attachment, and though to endeavour to excite affection in her now, would be not only folly, but crime, I could not, for many days, altogether dismiss her from my thoughts.

As I walked my horse through the village, my fancy called up her image before me. Her stature might have been about five feet and a half, or less,—for it is a difficult matter to judge of a woman's height—and the symmetry of her figure was matchless. It was one of those so rarely to be met with, exactly following the old Grecian models of classic female beauty. The deeply-hollowed back, the swelling chest and bosom, and high round neck,—the long lower limb, with its full upper development, and short, much-arched foot, all combined to make it perfect. Her waist was not slender—the word light would apply to it rather, for here no means of unnatural com-

pression had ever been practised, and it looked free and unconstrained as she stepped along, having a sort of indistinct undulatory motion, like a swan's neck, graceful exceedingly. Her face was very beautiful, the nose had just a trace of the Roman curve, while the small plump mouth looked redder than the richest tint limner ever selected wherewithal to touch the lip of his ideal. Her eyes were of a deep, dark, almost indigo blue, large and rolling, at times most spirited in their glances, at other times softened into an expression of such melting sweetness, that you could not look upon them without feeling an involuntary sigh stealing from your bosom, just as would be called up by a strain of music familiar to your childhood. Her hair was of a bright yellow, curling naturally, and glistening with a lustre almost faintly metallic, like tarnished gold wire. Add to these a skin, not snow-white certainly, but of a clear living white, clouded by a flush of health on either round cheek,—a high spotless forehead, small thin ear, pierced by a slender ring of gold,—and a hand, whose beauty not the labour of a factory could deform; and if you have anything of an active fancy, you may form in your mind a likeness of fair Cheeny Granton.

But it was not in personal excellence alone she stood out among her mates. She was a very clever girl, and her page on the library roll-book bore testimony both to the extent and nature of her reading. An ardent love of the poetry of Byron, Burns, and Moore, was, strangely enough, its distinguishing characteristic, and the continued perusal of this description of writing must have had no little effect in bringing about the events of this narrative. Her moral character was unexceptionable, her disposition amiable, though about her lip there lurked the trace of a haughty smile, and about her voice a slight tone of condescension, which, however, those who were habituated to her did not perceive. It was possible, too, occasionally to detect in her mind evidence of a deep, all-potent enthusiasm, similar to that of her mother, which seemed only to require an object to be called into vigorous life and light. But it was certainly not religious; for, though she loved her mother with an engrossing affection, she followed her tenets with what seemed respectful filial acquiescence, not faith. Such a being as this could hardly exist in any place without exciting around her the passions of admiration, love, envy, and hatred, in their

most violent forms. She was a marked girl about Westwater. Some were extravagantly fond and proud of her, others hated her bitterly, taking every opportunity of evincing this feeling, both by word and deed. She thought herself a lady, they said, and would take the shortest way to become one. But all these insinuations Jane took with a quiet smile, as things that were to be expected.

Lovers she had in abundance ; indeed every young man in the place had some pretensions to this character. For some of them she appeared to entertain very friendly feelings, though, when their attentions became more urgent, she could not conceal her annoyance. There was one, however, evidently more favoured than the rest. This was a young man of the name of Williams, who, for two years or more, had held the situation of teacher at Westwater. He was a pale, studious, anxious-looking young person, of some talent. He had been connected in an inferior way with a newspaper-office, in the large city I at first alluded to, and from that situation had been transferred to the one he held. But his crowning advantage was, that he professed ardently, and I believe sincerely, the same views of religion as Mrs. Granton, and they

used to spend hours together of evenings in the performance of their peculiar rites of worship. With her he was all in all, and her daughter certainly had a very great regard for him. But still I thought I could see that this regard was not what I myself would have been content with in similar circumstances. I was particularly struck with this thought a few days after my arrival.

It was a beautiful evening early in the summer, and I was taking a solitary walk up the bank of the stream to a place called the grove, about a mile or more above the factory, where there was a large reservoir, with an extensive system of locks and sluices. From its lonely and romantic character, this had always been my favourite walk, and here I was met by the so-called lovers. They were moving along slowly, side by side, he walking quite close to her, his eyes fixed upon her face with an appearance of complete devotion, while she listened to his address with a look as if it required an effort to keep her attention to it. As I passed, I remarked upon the beauty of the evening. She answered me quietly and civilly; he said nothing, but blushed and appeared much embarrassed and confused. I often met them

again, and always noticed in them the same demeanour.

But a change had come over the course of events at Westwater. My father having become a partner in the firm, removed to the city, there to take charge of the counting-house business, and another manager came to reside at the factory.

His name was Edward Southern, and as he occupies a prominent place in my story, I will stay to describe him. Whose child he was, no one knew. He had been brought up by a person formerly a gentleman's servant, and who received from some quarter unknown a regular payment for his maintenance. By this man, who kept a cigar-shop in London, he was tolerably educated, till about sixteen years of age. At this period, having been by chance present at an introductory lecture to a popular course of natural philosophy, the bent of his genius at once evinced itself, and he became devotedly fond of mechanical science. He studied this with so much success, that next season he obtained the situation of assistant to the lecturer, with a small salary, and the use of an apparatus-room and workshop. Here he made striking progress: his peculiar genius unfolded itself rapidly,

and in a year or two he astonished the lecturer by showing him an article he had written in one of the leading scientific journals. One step leads to another. He shortly after commenced, in an infidel publication, a series of papers, the tendency of which was to run down every thing, in government or religion, usually held established or sacred,—and which were remarkable for their original character. For these, the extensive sale of the pestiferous periodical afforded him liberal remuneration. Another short while passed, and he obtained the situation of lecturer on mechanics and chemistry, on the retirement of his former teacher. Another year saw issue from the press a work of his on a popular scientific subject, which ran speedily through two or three editions. His income, of which he was himself the sole creator, now amounted to several hundred pounds a-year, while his name was in the mouth of every one interested in popular science, especially as connected with manufactures.

To this person Messrs. H—— H—— and Co. offered the situation of overseer of their works, with the prospect of a junior partnership. He was indeed a most singular individual ; tall, and eminently handsome in person, with fine features, dark curling hair,

and whiskers, and eyes which, in their deep blackness, seemed to consist altogether of pupil. His manners again were most insinuating, though at times rendered all but offensive by an overweening pride of his own talent and success, which continually broke forth in his conversation, and a sneer constantly ready for every opinion differing from his own, and especially for every symptom in others of religious or moral feeling. The propriety of placing such a person as this over a factory employing several hundred young females may be questioned: but the owners only knew him as a scientific character, the inventor and patentee of several valuable improvements in spinning and weaving. But the result of his being placed in such a situation may be guessed by the reader, when I add to the above hints of his character that he was fond of styling himself by the phrase "a refined voluptuarian," and was utterly devoid of all principle, believing and stating man's sole happiness to consist in the gratification of appetite. In further aid of his person and address he was possessed of a ready tongue, a talent for delicate flattery, a decidedly good taste, a ready knack of turning his hand to anything, and a consummate knowledge of the world.

Upon his arrival at his new charge, his first proceeding was to introduce an entirely new system of discipline among the people, which, I must confess, proved to be considerably to the advantage of his employers. In personally setting this in operation, his eye lighted upon the widow's daughter at work, in the silk-weaving department of the factory. I was with him.

The moment he saw her, he stood struck, bending upon her a gaze, before which the red blush flew to her face, while she appeared at the same time unable to turn her eyes from his. A second or two this lasted, when he abruptly passed on. He had been talking to me with great volubility the moment before, but now he walked silently along, and completed the survey.

Their next encounter was in the walk up the stream I have before mentioned. Here he met her with Williams. He immediately addressed her, while Williams, knowing his place, dropped a little behind—his heart flooded on the instant with a new and bitter passion—jealousy.

Poor fellow ! at once he saw his fond air-castle of love and hope dashed in fragments to the ground, and he walked behind them, watching his new rival, whispering and exerting upon the girl all his many powers

of fascination—his blood boiling with jealousy, hatred, and rage. For more than an hour, Southern continued to walk slowly by her side, when suddenly turning round, and observing Williams, he calmly ordered him to go in some other direction. It was the manager—he had but to obey; and turning, he moved swiftly away in the direction of the grove. I was there myself at the time, enjoying the beautiful evening, when I saw him come hurriedly up. His whole frame appeared actually writhing under the influence of his passion, and he passed without observing me, muttering to himself as he went by a roundabout path homeward to the village. He went directly to her mother's house, to await her return. She came in shortly after him, but seemed absent and thoughtful, and, returning indistinct replies to his questions, retired to her apartment. He communicated to her mother what had occurred, and she, though she had perfect confidence in the sense and virtue of her daughter, was immediately struck with apprehensions of evil, little less than his. They sat for some hours that night in earnest conversation, and before they separated, knelt together in prayer, that that Power would interpose, which alone could prevent the calamity they dreaded.

Next day Southern's attention to Jane, while at work, attracted the notice of the other girls, and she had to listen to their bantering and ironical congratulations upon her good fortune. An evening or two after, Williams, who began to hope his fears had been groundless, ventured to ask her to accompany him in a walk. She did not at first appear inclined, but, on hearing that it was to be up the Westwater, immediately complied. That very evening the same scene was repeated. Southern met them, and at once bidding him go about his business, walked away with her towards the secluded spot called the grove.

Williams's worst fears now appeared likely to meet with immediate confirmation. How much more, when next evening, she returned home later than she had ever been before, refusing to him, and to her mother, any account of where or with whom she had been. The next, he determined at once to come to a conclusion. He watched her as she left the factory-gate, and dogged her up the footpath, where he saw her joined by Southern, and walk with him towards the place I have before alluded to.

His passion was now roused to madness. He attacked Southern in the most frantic manner; but in

the hands of his muscular rival, found himself but as an infant. The latter, with a bitter sneer, mastering his hands, lifted him from the ground and plunged him up to the neck in the reservoir, holding him down till he was nearly suffocated, while she stood by, pale and much agitated, without uttering a word.

Williams scrambled out and slunk away, hearing, as he went, the loud contemptuous laugh of his hated and triumphant rival—what were his feelings I will not attempt to say. Next day Southern called at the school, to dismiss him from his situation, but found the door locked, and the children playing around it. He had been anticipated—poor Williams was gone; after his ignominious defeat, he could no longer look upon a known face, and had gone off, wet and dripping as he was, to hide his shame in the great solitude of London.

But now comes the bitter portion of my task. Dear reader, had I been sure of your sympathy, or of your forgiveness, I could have found it in my heart to have lingered longer upon the banks of the beautiful West-water; to tediousness I could have dwelt upon the perfection of the widow's lovely daughter. Yet a little could I have tarried, describing even the scaly

splendour of the serpent Southern : but it can be protracted no longer.

Alas, alas for you, fair Jane Granton ! whither could have wandered the truant seraph that should surely have hovered watchful, round the brow of one so beautiful and young ? why is your spirit changed ? why is the head that used to sit so proudly upon that graceful neck bowed down in blushful humility to the ground ? Woe worth the day ! you are in love, Cheeny ! and it is a love you are ashamed of. No soft, tender emotion is your love, poor lost girl ! it is a passion, a madness, an ever-glowing fire within you, consuming to ashes every other thought and feeling !

Williams's departure, and its cause, were soon the theme of all lips in Westwater, and every eye was fixed, though covertly, upon Jane and him, the dreaded overseer, by all hated and by her loved ; oh, how deeply !

Many days had not passed, when she appeared completely abandoned to her new passion. Every evening might she be seen, stealing away in the direction of that fatal footpath, to enjoy the pernicious bliss of an hour with him, whose every thought by day and night was the

accomplishment of her ruin: and every evening was the chain of his fascination girded more strongly around the heart of the poor devoted girl;—she appeared to live only in his presence, to have no enjoyment but in his society. At all other times she was absent and thoughtful, avoiding the gaze of all she saw, appearing to be dreaming over in her mind the delights of her next meeting with him, when all the scoffs of her companions, and all the upbraidings of her wild, fanatical mother, would be compensated by one kind look from his dark eye, by one gentle pressure to his manly bosom.

I remember observing them often, his arm around her waist, while she, with her hand upon his shoulder, so fondly and confidingly walked slowly along, gazing up into his face as he talked to her, with a look of mingled love and wonder, a kind of devotion, that gave her features an expression altogether new to them, and most beautiful to see. But after some days I remarked that this changed. Southern himself now appeared actually to feel a degree of the passion he had so powerfully excited in her, though it seemed to wear too much of the voluptuarian aspect to come within the category of genuine love.

I came upon them one evening at the grove ; it was now midsummer. They were sitting together, hand in hand, upon a turf bench, close to a small waterfall, a favourite resort of theirs, and as they sat they gazed at each other without speaking, she with her face flushed and glowing, and her eyes sparkling in a way I have never else observed. In that attitude they continued for several minutes without noticing me, so absorbed were they with each other. She appeared to feel a strange delirious rapture in his mere presence ; it was most singular—there was an enthusiasm in it—indeed, now at last the spark had been applied, and that constitutional fanaticism which her mother gave her, and which had lain so long dormant in her bosom, blazed forth in this new form more fiercely than it had ever flamed in her ! Was it indeed so, was that frenzied love but an approach to hereditary insanity ?

But while this fierce passion had been thus advancing, think not that efforts were wanting to stay its progress. My own advice I ventured to give, but it was received in a way that led me not again to offer it ; but the mother—the enthusiastically virtuous, the wildly religious mother—everything a mother could, she did ; she reasoned, entreated, wept, and prayed ;

anon, stormed and cursed her poor, distracted child. Nay, once she went through some strange superstitious ceremonies with a minister of her own sect from the neighbouring city, with the view—smile not, reader, at the weak woman's delusion—of casting out the devil, which she firmly believed had entered into her beautiful daughter. Sometimes she had recourse even to personal violence ; but it was all in vain,—tears and entreaties, upbraiding and anger, had but the same reply.

“Alas! mother, I know it is wrong to love him as I do, but I cannot help it. Oh! can I help loving him, my noble Southern? him, who knows more than ever man knew ; who speaks to me as never man spoke ; who loves me with a love, for which I would willingly exchange the heaven you hope for, mother !”

“Yes, girl, love him : love that incarnate spirit of evil, that the Almighty has permitted to afflict us for a time for our transgressions. Love him, and prepare to meet the eternal wrath that will follow on the deep sin he tempts you to. Oh, my child, my child ! my one only darling ; let us flee from this place, from the circle of this fiend's enchantment ; he does not love you, Cheeny ; he hates you, feels contempt for you ;

he will ruin you, girl, and then spurn you out into the world a wretched and degraded being !”

In the excited strain, of which the above is but a faint and meagre example, did the widow daily and nightly endeavour to turn her daughter from her mad affection. Nor were her efforts always unattended with at least the appearance of success. More than once she got her to confess she believed he wanted to ruin her ; and to promise to forget, to avoid him, even to leave the place, and seek an asylum for her virtue far away from Westwater.

Such confessions and promises she would make, weeping upon her fond parent’s bosom ; on one such occasion—

“Yes, mother,” said she, “it is that dark eye of his that undoes me. He never bends it upon me, but I feel him drinking away from me my very soul. I cannot resist it. You are right, he is an evil spirit ; he tells me the Bible is *a lie*, mother (the old woman shuddered), and persuades me there is no such thing as sin or evil !”

“Oh, my child !” exclaimed the mother, “let us give thanks to Him, who has at length opened your eyes to the Tophet on whose brink you stood !”

And the two women knelt together, joining their voices in thanksgiving. But as the hour drew near when she was wont to meet her lover, another change came over her spirit; she became anxious and restless, sighed often, moved about from one part of the house to another, and at last, springing up, threw her arms about her mother's neck and kissed her, then bursting from her, flew out of the house and away to the grove, where she found Southern, and falling upon his breast, gave way to a wild fit of hysterical laughter and weeping.

But he now began to think the charm nearly wound up, and resolved to remove her from Westwater to the large city; for even he had feeling enough left to wish to keep the affair apart from the eyes of the work-people.

One evening, when the summer was now wearing over, he broke the proposal to her, that she should leave her mother's house, and become altogether his.

As might be expected, the infatuated girl consented, and promised to meet him next night at a particular place, where he was to be in waiting with his gig, to convey her for ever from Westwater. All next day poor Cheeny tried hard to conceal from her mother her purpose; but towards night she could no

longer accomplish it, and, clasping her to her bosom, bade her farewell for ever.

“What—my child!” screamed the widow; “where are you going?”

“To Southern.”

“To be married to *him*? The atheist—the fiend!”

“No, mother—*not married.*”

A scene ensued, which I feel myself altogether unable to describe. The widow became perfectly frantic; she prayed her daughter to remain: she commanded, implored, even struck her, but all in vain: the deluded girl would go, and struggled to be away. There was something fearful in it, and the neighbours trembled as they listened outside the door. At last, when she found she could no longer restrain her, she appeared to yield.

“I will let you go to him—I will; but first answer me this question. I adjure you by (here she used an expression too awful to be repeated here), tell me the truth. Are you still pure as you were before this devil possessed you? Have you sinned as yet in thought only, and not in deed?”

Jane, drooping her beautiful head, avowed herself guilty of no sin greater than loving him.

“Well then, go!”

She went: and as she stepped over the threshold, her mother knelt down upon it, and screamed after her a curse of a most wild and awful sound and meaning—an imprecation such as none but a mother, and a mother in a state of maniacal frenzy, could utter: it had in its strange fanatical blasphemy something at once terrible and sublime, and contained a prayer that the Almighty would smite her with some sudden and dreadful evil before she could accomplish her purpose.

Her daughter, as she heard it, drew herself together as if a stone had struck her, and hurried swiftly away.

As the widow lost her in the darkness, she turned into the house, and shutting it up, and putting out the lights, began moaning and wailing aloud, in a manner that drew tears from the wives and daughters of the neighbours, as they listened with fear and wonder around it.

Jane reached the place appointed, and found him waiting.

“Are you mine, love?” said he, in an exulting tone.

“I am, Southern—*body and soul!*”

He lifted her into the gig, and off they flew along the dark road with great swiftness. She wept much,

and he was endeavouring to soothe her with his fondest blandishments, when they rapidly approached an abrupt turn in the road, about a mile or more from Westwater. Just then, one of the large waggons belonging to the company was slowly toiling its way to the factory, loaded with an immense pile of raw cotton. They were on it ere they were aware; and in an instant one of their wheels struck the fore-wheel, and they were discharged from their seats to the ground.

Southern sprang to his feet, unhurt; but, ere he had done so, the heavy hind-wheel of the ponderous machine had gone crushing over the left knee of fair Jane Granton, and she lay mangled and senseless in the road.

The astonished waggoners lifted her from the ground, and, by his direction put her, along with the fragments of the gig, upon their waggon, and urged their horses quickly towards Westwater; while he, catching his own animal, and disencumbering it of its disordered furniture, mounted it, and dashed furiously away to the city, there to drown thought in a mad debauch.

But who could imagine or describe the mother,

when the waggon stopped before her door, and its conductors bore into her dwelling the broken and bleeding body of her only child. At first, she stood struck with wild amazement; then, when they told her what had happened, she grew pale as death, and remained silent for a few moments: anon, she broke out into cries of lamentation that were heartrending to listen to, mingled with strange prayers and curses, clothed in wild, scriptural language, and finally sunk exhausted to the ground, as senseless as her daughter.

The waggoners, two elderly and humane men, immediately put in order one of the light spring vans in constant use about the factory, and fitting it with a bed, put into it poor Cheeny, and, covering her with blankets and drawing close the canvass covering of the vehicle, attached a fresh horse to it, and drove off to the city, to convey her to the hospital.

The widow recovered in about an hour, and hearing what had been done, took her bonnet and staff, and a small bundle, and shutting her little shop, betook herself to the road, and travelled all night after them.

At this time I had been about a week resident at the hospital as a pupil. On the day following the events just narrated, I went at the hour of visit, which

was in the afternoon, into the accident-ward of the establishment. It was a long hall, with a range of low iron-bedsteads on each side, a large fireplace at the end, with doors to the right and left, leading to two or three small apartments, called the side-rooms, where any patients were kept whose cases required particular attention, or removal from the noise of the ward.

Surrounding one of the bedsteads I saw a crowd of pupils, and among them the surgeon and his clerk; and judge of my surprise to hear the latter read from the journal, a report as follows:—

“Jane Granton, aged eighteen, about middle stature, fair-complexioned, and very good-looking; factory-girl. Last evening, near Westwater cotton-factory, ——shire; was thrown from a gig,” &c.

I listened with amazement, and elbowing my way among the young gentlemen, saw the identical girl, lying along in the usual Hospital night-dress, her face covered with sweat, while a twinge of agony passed over its features, every now and then, when anything touched the bed, and a bright hectic flush spotted her cheeks. At her head sat her mother, holding mechanically in her hands a small tin pannikin, containing

wine-and-water, and gazing around her with a sort of blank-amazed look, while her lips continued moving rapidly, though she uttered no sound.

As soon as the clerk had finished reading his report the surgeon examined the knee, and casting a look of extreme compassion at the suffering girl, directed that a consultation should be called that afternoon, and passed to the next patient.

When they had left the ward, I went close to the bed whereon lay my once familiar schoolmate. As soon as she saw me she burst into tears and turned her head away, while her mother, rising, bent over her and kissed her cheek, and they wept together.

I was deeply moved ; I could not dare to ask them how it had happened ;—but I told them, that if from my residence at the hospital I could be of any assistance to them, they were heartily welcome to it. They both thanked me, and I withdrew, indeed the scene was such that, new as I was to hospital life, I was altogether unable to bear it.

That afternoon the consultation was held, and the decision was AMPUTATION !

When it was announced, Jane turned deadly pale, while the cold sweat broke out anew upon her face,

and a low moan was groaned out bitterly from her bosom. The widow clasped her hands and looked upward, trembling like the leaf of a tree.

The hospital at — was a large, dark, stone edifice, consisting of two parts joined together like the limbs of the letter T. It was several stories high, and over the centre of its roof arose a great glass dome, which formed the operating theatre. This situation was chosen, as much with the view of obtaining the best possible light, as of preventing the cries of patients from reaching the ears of their fellow unfortunates in the wards, or of the public, in the streets. It was reached by a series of wide stone stairs, with long lobbies and passages leading to the different parts of the building. In the interior was a circular place, with an area in the centre, of a similar shape, and tiers of seats rising all round, one above another, up to a considerable height. A circle of massive pillars supported the dome, which was very lofty, and round about the cornice, over these, were a number of medallions, bearing representations of figures dancing, playing on lyres, &c.—not very suitable ornaments, certainly, for a place of such a description. It also contained, on one side, a pulpit and clerk's desk, for it

served likewise as a chapel for the patients on Sundays. In the centre of the area, which was laid with red painted canvass, stood the operation-table, a most striking thing to look at. It appeared very heavy and strong, was covered with dark leather, and had dispersed about it a quantity of iron machinery, which gave rise to the most revolting ideas in the mind.

It was now two o'clock in the afternoon. The place was already nearly filled by the medical gentlemen, their clerks, and pupils, and I, who felt very strongly, as it was the first important operation I had ever seen, took up my position close to one of the pillars that supported the roof. We waited for some time, when the folding-doors were thrown open, and we saw Jane borne in by the dressers and nurses. As soon as she saw the crowd of spectators,—many of them mere boys—the flush of pain forsook her cheeks, and she became pale as her dress; but on the instant, as if a floodgate at her heart had been thrown open, a red flush gushed over her face and neck, completely suffusing them. She was placed on the table, whose machinery being slightly put in motion, immediately placed her in the most suitable and safe position. But who is it that stands beside her head, whispering endearment to her,

and fondly caressing her fair brow, whereon the sweat now glistens in diamond-like drops?—it is her mother, the mother who, in her frenzy, prayed Heaven that this might befall her. How changed, how dreadfully preyed upon, looks that poor woe-stricken parent now!

But the tourniquet had been applied, and the surgeon, after a short examination, to make sure of his course, motions with his head to a tall young man, who stands apart. What is that they pass under the table, glancing for a moment, clear, cold, and metallic? It is the *knife*! It was quickly handed, but she saw it, and her frame made a convulsive spring, that shook the iron-work of the hideous table, whilst an expression seized her face of mortal fear and horror. My eyes were now fixed immovably on the operator. Balancing the long sword-like instrument in his hand for a moment, he struck it into the milk-white flesh of the noble limb, transfixing it completely, and cutting rapidly to the surface. Thereupon the red blood splashed upon the floor, and there shot up into the echoing concave of the lofty dome, a protracted shriek—the wild “Oh my God!” of agony unendurable by human spirit. It was followed by a succession of short, sudden, exhausted gasps, like efforts to catch at and retain a life about to

take wings to itself, and flee away for ever. But are these the only sounds? No; what voice is that mingling its unearthly notes in the dreadful discord? It is the widow's. Falling at once upon her knees, while her cap drops from her head, and her long gray hair streams abroad upon her shoulders, in the disorder of extreme excitement, she stretches wide her arms, and prays with the strange and vehement fervour of her sect, that He would give her poor afflicted darling strength to drink to the dregs the cup of his wrath, or would, in his mercy, give the suffering spirit permission to escape away from its mangled tenement.

It was indeed a most appalling scene; so much so as even to shake the nerve of the surgeon, a most determined and experienced gentleman, whose habitually florid countenance grew pale as that of the fainting girl under his hands—but he went on with his work. I could not look at it; I felt sick and dizzy, and turned my eyes for relief to the bright blue sky, seen through the glass overhead, and was watching the sunny white clouds sailing along. Hark! what hideous sound is that, heard so strangely distinct above the groans of the daughter and the prayers of the scarcely less agonized parent? It is the harsh grating of the SAW, as

it rasps through the living bone and marrow,—oh, most horrible!

The dissevered member was hurriedly pushed under the table.

“She is gone!” said some one.

“I knew He would take her!” said the widow, rising to her feet, “*I never prayed to Him in vain!*”

“No, no,” cried the surgeon, “lower her head,—a little wine, Mr. ——,” addressing the clerk.

She sighed deeply, and slowly returned to consciousness. In the meantime the vessels had been secured, and the dressing having been completed with much dexterity, she was removed to one of the quiet side-rooms of the accident ward.

The surgeon immediately came forward, and showing the assemblage the extensive and severe nature of the injury, informed them that the means they had seen used were the only ones that could be had recourse to, to save the patient’s life. He adverted to the unusual and very trying nature of the scene altogether, and recommended them to be never unprepared for such occurring in their own future practice. He concluded by stating he had no doubt the case would do well.

Next morning we found she had passed a good night ; indeed all promised a rapid recovery. The second night she slept well, and there continued to be no indication of an unfavourable result.

Immediately after the operation I wrote to Southern an account of it. The next day's post from Westwater brought me the following answer :—

“My dear —,

“I regret exceedingly my idea of carrying the girl Granton to the city. The adventure should have been consummated at Westwater ;—but indeed, what with her own and her mother's madness, I always had doubts about whether the affair could be brought to a desirable wind-up. I think she can be of little use to me now, after being pruned in the manner you describe, so that Williams may have her for me. I leave her a *legacy* to him—eh? By the way, I should like to have the job hushed up as quietly as possible, as it may interfere with another small piece of business I am about to engage in. When will you be out to Westwater?—I have a number of things to show you,—one a new application of the eccentric motion in lappet-weaving, an idea I hope you will give me some credit

for. I have found the book, too, that denies the paddle-wheel to be a modern invention ;—but you will hear and see all when you come.

“ Believe me, my dear ——,

“ Yours very truly,

“ EDWARD SOUTHERN.”

This most heartless and depraved letter I actually read twice over before I could convince myself of its reality ; and from that moment resolved never again to hold communication of any description with such an atrocious scoundrel.

Next day, I went in to see how she was. I found her mother absent. She appeared overjoyed to see me alone.

“ Well, Mr. ——,” said she, with much animation, “ has he come—is he here ?”

“ Do not think of him any more, Cheeny,” said I, “ you have been most dreadfully deceived by him. He is a most unprincipled villain.”

She stared at me with a look as if she had not understood me.

“ Did you write to him ?” said she at length.

At this moment the thought forcibly seized me,

“Shall I not endeavour, even at the eleventh hour, to disabuse her of this delusion, and show her at once the character by whom she has been so woefully duped?” I put the letter into her hands. She caught it quickly and rose up in bed to read it.

“Ah,” said she, “how well I know that noble hand, so beautiful, so manly, so like himself!” She pressed it to her lips and bosom. I watched her as she read; she grew very pale, while a look of bewilderment overspread her features. She read it through without appearing quite to understand it; then looked at the signature, the date, and the address; then drawing in a deep breath, and passing her hand over her forehead, to hold aside the yellow curls that were wantoning across it, began again, and read it over once more. When she had done, she seemed for a moment in a kind of stupor, then dropping the paper on the bed, fell back upon the pillow, and, covering her face with her hands, turned round toward the wall.

My heart smote me on the instant for what I had done. I could not stand beside her. I left the side-room, and, going off to my own apartments, sat down alone to curse my extreme folly.

Next day, at the hour of visit, the poor girl was

reported delirious, the affection being what medical men call the low, muttering delirium, as distinguished by Dupuytren from the excited disorder usually called by that name. Two days this lasted, during which she took nothing but the stimulants usually administered in such cases. On the third I went to see her. She gave a weak languid smile when I entered, and, when I took her wrist, pressed my hand, while a single small tear stood in each sunken eye. Her face was now fearfully changed. No one could have believed her to be the fair factory-girl I have elsewhere so vainly attempted to describe. Her cheeks were hollow, her skin wan and clammy, her lips shrunken and livid, nothing of her bright beauty remained save the golden tresses and the beaming blue eye. Her mother was beside her, and, from the absence of the delirium, entertained strong hopes of her recovery. She had one of the hospital bibles on her knee, from which she continued to read, but all the while I saw that her daughter's thoughts and attention were far, far away.

Next morning I went to see her again, and was made aware of one of the most singular and incredible phenomena that have ever come under my experience. When I entered she seemed much excited. She

motioned me to her, for she was now so weak she could scarcely make herself heard.

“What men are these that came and took me away, Mr. ——?”

“Took you away, Cheeny, what do you mean?”

“Why, two dark, indistinct men, that came here last night when my mother was asleep. They opened the door, and came in with a black board, laid me on it, and carried me away down a narrow, crooked staircase, along a long cold passage, that sounded strangely and drearily as they walked, till we came to a big black door, marked No. 14, for the moon shone through a little grated window, and I could see it quite plainly, though motionless with weakness, cold, and terror. The door opened, and they bore me into a large, cold, and damp place, with a high window, with iron bars, and having a curious, earthy smell. They then laid me on a table, and left me, locking the door as they went. I lay for some time, when another door opened, and I could see into a large square hall, crowded with dim figures. One of them, a tall, dark being, approached me; I fainted away, and on coming to myself found I had been conveyed back. Oh, Mr. ——, this is a strange place, and we trust in you for protection;

did they take me for dead, and were they going to dissect me?"

She told me this with an appearance of extreme terror. For my part I was thunderstruck, and utterly at a loss. She had described with the most unerring exactness the private stair of the ward, a long underground passage which communicated with the cellars, &c. of the hospital, the *dead-house*, the fatal No. 14, on which she said the moon shone through the little window, and, lastly, the clinical lecture-room. Now, both morally and physically, it was impossible she could have left the side-room, for the night-nurse sat up in the ward all the night, and had observed nothing; besides, in my own pocket was the key of the private door of the ward opening out upon the staircase, which I had locked with my own hands the evening before, this being part of my duty in the house, and which, on examination, I now found as I had left it. Of course sleepwalking was out of the question. But so exactly had she described it! And then, along with that fact, to think that she had never in her life before been in the hospital, in the city, indeed out of Westwater at all, and that when she was brought in she had entered by the large front door, and up the

great stone staircase I at first described, to the ward ; that from thence to the operating theatre, and back again to the side-room, comprised the whole of her removals ! It was indeed a most inexplicable dream, delusion, or whatever you may call it, and one of those facts that seem to sport with our ignorance of that most mysterious branch of science, the physiology of the nervous system. I mentioned it afterwards at a society meeting to a student, a friend of my own, and he referred me for an explanation to the study of Mesmerism. 

Unable at the time to trust my own reason—she persisted so strongly in her statement—having procured the key of the door No. 14, I opened the private door of the ward and descended the staircase. On reaching the door I could not help pondering on the precision with which she had described every particular. On going into the dead-house (a large stone-paved place, with a high barred window, where the bodies of those who had died in the hospital were kept till removed by their friends) I found everything as it should be, and no trace of any one having been there.

As I returned along the passage, musing upon the above, I was met by the sub-porter of the institution,

who informed me that there was somebody outside the back-door (by which the friends of patients were admitted, though only at a particular hour). The person had been knocking furiously for a considerable time, he told me, but had latterly been a little more quiet. I bade him unfasten the door, which opened into a quiet lane, leading between the hospital and a large churchyard. He did so. A man was sitting upon the step. I touched him with my foot, when he sprang to his feet, and showed me—Williams. I was much surprised. He looked exceedingly worn and haggard.

“ Bless me, Williams !” said I ; “ I thought you were in London. How did you come here ?”

“ Oh, I cannot tell you, Mr. ———. Is she living ?”

“ She is ; but very, very ill, Williams.”

“ Oh, let me see her, good Mr. ———, as you hope yourself for mercy !”

“ Well, so you shall, but come in and compose yourself a little. It is against rule ; you should have had an order from the matron ; but I will go and get you one.”

While I was gone he had made his way to the room

where she lay. I found him sitting on the edge of her bed, pressing her hand between his.

“Forgive you, Jane!” he was saying: “May God forgive him who has wrought you this, as freely as I forgive you, my first and only love!”

She was now falling very weak indeed. It was plain to me she could not live over the evening. Of this her mother and Williams were likewise persuaded, and neither of them left her, but passed the time in the earnest performance of the peculiar religious forms and duties of their church. It felt like intrusion on my part to stay, so I left them, looking in every now and then. In the course of the afternoon, on entering the room, I observed her gazing round her with a curious glance, as of amusement and delight, mingled with surprise.

“Mr. ———,” said she, “whose are all these pretty, smiling little children, round about the bed?”

I felt at a loss what to say; of course there was no child there; but it was not so with the rapt and fanatical widow.

“These,” said she, “are the babes of two years old and under, that were slain by command of Herod throughout all the borders of Bethlehem. Even as

one of these shall you shortly be, my own darling girl !”

“ How bright and beautiful they look !” murmured her daughter.

There was a long pause.

“ Mother, dear mother, I am going away from you, —give me your hand,—Williams,—Mr.—”

She was gone ! Slowly the dim eclipse of death came over the orbs of her celestial eyes, and her lips fell asunder.

“ The Lord gave and taketh away,” said the widow, slowly and with difficulty getting out each syllable.

“ Blessed be His holy name !” answered Williams ; and, falling forward upon the body, he gave way to a paroxysm of hysteric grief like a weakly girl. Adding a fervent “ Amen,” I withdrew to the neighbouring side-room, which was empty, for I was ashamed to go through the ward in the state of emotion I was in.

Next day, a clinical lecture was delivered on her case to the pupils of the establishment, and the next her mother and Williams came, with a few friends of their religious sect, and removed her body. But she does not sleep in the quiet little churchyard at Westwater. Before they went away they gave me a bright

and abundant tress of her yellow hair ; then, each wringing my hand warmly, they went out from the city northward, and I saw them no more.

But what remains to tell? Southern's piece of business mentioned in his letter to me, proved his ruin. It was a scheme to elope with the wife of the principal partner of the Westwater company, who held through her his shares in the concern. He hoped that upon her being divorced he could marry her, and obtain with her the immense property she had brought her husband. He was, however, most lamentably foiled, and, with a broken character, deprived of his situation at Westwater. His name was immediately erased by advertisement from the books of several scientific societies of which he was a member ; and he went to seek his bread in London, where I believe he draws a wretched subsistence from an obscure and filthy penny paper, of which he is editor and proprietor.

CHAPTER VII.



OXENFORD GRANGE.

As we were driving home to L—— (one of the great commercial towns of England), our party consisting of Dr. C——, his lady, and myself, he called our attention to a house about half a mile from the road. It was visible through a break between two low hills, and appeared to be a large compact mansion, imbedded in a niche in the side of an extensive wood. A lawn stretched from its front down to the side of a broad stream, and was sprinkled with young trees, each surrounded by a little box of wood fence; while upon the water we could see a punt moored close to the bank with an individual sitting in it fishing.

“That is Oxenford Grange,” said the doctor; “at least it was, for by what name they call the modern

demesne I am ignorant—if you put me in mind, I will tell you a strange story connected with it.”

That evening we were but too glad to call for the performance of his promise, with which he forthwith proceeded to favour us, as follows :—

It is now many years since I was a student at a Northern University. It was then my lot to form a connexion of a very remarkable kind. I attended—what is rather unusual—the philosophical and medical classes at the same time. This course was likewise followed by another student who bore the singularly sounding name of Buster Strangways Bruton. He was a mulatto, and a large, coarse, exceedingly ill-made young man. He was very dark for one of his class—nearly perfectly black, and had all the peculiar deformities of the negro developed in his face and figure to a very marked degree.

The large splay foot, with the long bony calfless shank set into the middle of it, was particularly observable; the heel projecting nearly as much behind as the toes did before. His arms again, long and muscular, with a pair of horribly big black hands at their ends, flapped loosely from his shoulders as if attached

by some kind of universal joint. His face was still more unpleasing—indeed, monstrously ugly. His forehead was narrow and receding, his nose very broad and flat, appearing as if sunk in between the high cheek-bones and protruding jaws. His great thick lips stood out much beyond the upper part of the visage, giving to it, along with the large heavy chin, a peculiar animal expression, not much relieved certainly by the short, close-cut, woolly crop of hair that looked like a coarse worsted skullcap clinging to his head.

In addition, he bore constantly around him an odour—that characteristic of the African race, which not the most assiduous cleanliness nor the subtlest perfumes could purge or conceal. This was the only point to which I found it difficult to reconcile myself on our after intimacy. His gait was awkward and ungainly in the extreme; and, to crown all, he stutted violently—indeed, in a way it was painful to listen to—the moment he became the least excited.

But there was one redeeming feature, the dark eye, large and rolling, with an expression of fervid thought beaming in every glance—yes! without such an eye the face would have been merely disgusting and ridi-

culous—with it you felt the character of the countenance completely changed. You saw no longer the ugliness of a Caliban, but the lofty, almost majestic deformity of a blasted superior being. You looked not on it with derision or pity, but with aversion, awe, and a desire to be relieved from its presence as from the pressure of an incubus.

And yet within this loathsome carcass sojourned a mind whose fellow I have rarely known ; with a capacity for knowledge, and a power of acquiring and retaining it unsurpassable ; with feelings of the acutest edge, and tastes of the most refined and delicate character ;—a mind already stored with the gems and gold of ancient and modern literature, and fast filling with the true wealth of science and philosophy.

His judgment was clear, penetrating, and decided ; his moral character upright and unswerving, and his religion exalted and pure, but closely bordering on superstition ; even that, however, of an elevated description. Moreover, he was a creature of emotion. All passions that wrought in him were most intense, and vivid, sudden, and fiery ; he knew not liking, disliking, anger, fear, hope,—but passionate love, ran-

corous hatred, fury, terror, and ardent aspiration. His ambition was unbounded ; the schemes it prompted would have been ridiculous from their apparent impossibility, did not their immensity lend them something of the sublime.

But no feeling could exceed his utter loathing of his own person, save the exquisite bitterness caused by continually seeing a similar loathing of it manifested by others. This was to him a source of perpetual misery ; so great, that many years before I knew him, he would have committed suicide, he assured me, had not his judgment led him to consider such an act an insult to that Being who had made him what he was ; doubtless for some wise purpose. I have seen him throw himself on the carpet and writhe about under the extreme wretchedness of these thoughts—groaning and crying out in anguish. At other times he would endeavour to talk in a light and heedless manner of his external appearance—but the moment that even I, his most familiar friend, attempted to speak in the same strain, the red light of passion shot from his eye, and his dark visage grew lurid with the boiling blood, and I shrank silent and abashed, the idea rising in my

mind of one who, walking on the black crust of Etna, comes suddenly on a chink through which can be seen the living lava smouldering below.

“Well, Mr. C——,” said he, one day, after we had sat awhile beside the sandbath in his little laboratory, waiting for the evaporation of a fluid we were experimenting on, “am I not in very earnest an *object*? So horribly ugly as to carry loathing with me wherever I go? Oh, were it only dread, hatred—even contempt—how I could bear it—but disgust!” and he gnashed his teeth. “There is a curse on me—nothing about me but is hideous—my face, my person—a negro’s and deformed—my birth doubly dishonourable—the bastard of a slave—my very name, Buster Strangways Bruton—could anything be more absurd or ridiculous in sound or sense?—more abominable? It is like a rattling kettle tied to a mangy mongrel! Not even my voice could escape—stuttering like a drivelling idiot’s. Everything seems to have been heaped upon me that could render me a mockery to my fellow-creatures. Why? can you see no reason?”

He paused a little, I did not know how to reply so as to avoid offending him. He continued,

“There is a country, a continent, where my de-

formities will become beauties, my birth noble, my name musical, my intellect,” and he touched his forehead lightly, with a gesture of pride, “that of a god! Can you see no reason now why an all-wise Being should have coupled a mind like mine to such a body; should have bound more than the spirit of a white man to the frame of a negro? I can. It is this: That I may go out to those benighted nations and carry the arts, the learning, and the religion of Europe to the heart of barbarous Africa. You think this the vain dream of an enthusiast, stung to madness by the scorn and despite of his fellow-men. Was Mahomet’s career a dream, or that of Peter the hermit, or that of Bacchus of old, the conqueror and civilizer of India? Were this man, Bonaparte” (he was then at the zenith of his fame), “a negro, a child of the great desert, what might be looked for? But, more than that—were he born there, educated in all the learning European ever knew, and returned to that region, what might *not* be looked for? Yes, Mr. C——, to this end I devote my whole energies; my intellect and my fortune. I will be not only a teacher but a ruler. I will consolidate all the separate tribes of Africa into one vast enlightened people, the government of which

shall be liberal, just, and merciful. I feel this to be my destiny—the purpose of my being. There is a voice within me which has urged me to it, day and night, for years, and I know that the moment I forsake the noble pursuit for which I have been so singularly adapted—that I desert the sacred cause of my oppressed species—that instant will a heavy judgment descend upon me. I have been created for one sole end, which I must and will fulfil. Had it not been for the consciousness of this, do you think this proud soul would have borne so long the anguish of such a frame, when one exertion of will could have shattered the shapeless potsherd, and set the eternal essence free?”

All this, I make no question, sounds to you like the raving of one insane, and indeed, it has all along been matter of doubt to me whether it was monomania, or the inspiration of genius, that so powerfully influenced his character and conduct. I feel most inclined to lean toward the latter supposition however. If it was madness, there was much method in it, and this is the only point that I can see in which madness and genius differ.

In fact ever since I came to know him I felt con-

vinced he was one of those created to work some mighty change among his fellow-creatures, for good or evil. I have often been amazed at the extent of his intellect, my own being rebuked and utterly overthrown in his presence. The stupendous nature of the scheme that was his continual topic, and the facility with which his mind seemed to grasp, to twist, turn, and examine it in all its lights and shades, struck me with astonishment, and I listened with humility and wonder.

Almost every science he had penetrated, nearly all arts he knew, and now he was adding the treatment and cure of disease to the noble catalogue, in order to fully fit himself for the great part he believed himself called to play. He did nothing but study, morning, noon, and night ; in fact, there was no other thing he could do, his exterior being an impassable barrier between him and society. The perfect *sang froid* with which he set about mastering, and did master, questions that appeared to me altogether beyond my own scope, actually amazed me ; and when I saw how easily he accomplished these, I sometimes almost believed in the possibility of his ultimately fulfilling the great scheme to which they were pre-

paratory. "At all events," thought I, "he will make a strong struggle for it."

With his fellow-students at the classes he had no intercourse, they shrank from the slightest connexion with him; refusing even to sit near him at lecture. This he saw, and was deeply stung; but he was too proud to succumb to them, and on all occasions maintained an equal hauteur, his essays and other displays of talent preventing him from meeting with that positive insult at their hands which he encountered from all else. But the fact of our attending the two separate kinds of classes, and having to walk every day a considerable distance together, threw us more into each other's company. It was a long time, however, before he reposed confidence in me; but when he did, it grew into a friendship as ardent and strong as his other emotions, and I was soon enabled to acquire the following knowledge of his origin:

His father, Strangways Bruton, was a mercantile man, who had raised himself by industry and talent from obscurity. Besides the estate of Oxenford in ———shire, he was owner of several valuable lands in Jamaica, and was also in after-life connected with an extensive banking concern, which yielded a very great

addition to his income. He was a strange character ; like his son, exceedingly violent in his passions ; and especially remarkable for obstinacy and an untiring vindictive spirit, that pursued its object unceasingly. His marriage, a very unhappy one, gave him a daughter, shortly after which his wife died. This daughter grew up such another as himself,—the same violence of passion, energy of mind, and vindictive spirit being strongly marked in her disposition. As she entered her womanhood, strange whispers crept abroad regarding her. Her language and deportment were remarked as altogether unbecoming her station in life ; at last it was hinted that an infant had appeared at Oxenford and had been disposed of none knew how. People declined visiting the house ; her father was fearfully roused, and shortly she fled his house, accompanied by the partner of her folly and crime, his footman.

Bruton left the country immediately, went to the West Indies, and remained there during the rest of his life. While there he became deeply involved in that dreadful traffic the slave-trade, then in its full rankness, and was notorious for cruelty to the unfortunates that fell into his hands ; indeed, so much as

even in those times to cause a judicial investigation into his conduct. A son was born to him there—the mother a negress—this was my friend Buster Strangeways. To him at his death he bequeathed by will his whole property, including Oxenford, and the shares of the banking business in England; not once in the document alluding to his daughter or her issue.

Young Bruton was sent to England to acquire an education suitable to such prospects. At school the ridicule and contempt to which his appearance subjected him roused the spirit within him, and called into activity that intellect at whose workings I had so often wondered. Lord Byron has written,

Deformity is daring;
It is its essence to o’ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal,
Ay, the superior of the rest—there is
A spur in its halt movements to become
All that the others cannot in such things
As still are free to both—

and most palpably did he show forth the truth of this passage, outstripping all competitors in every contest. Thence he removed to the university I have alluded to, his success there being equally distinguished.

At length, completing his twenty-fifth, year he came into uncontrolled possession of the whole property of

his father. All power of trustees at that period ceased, and he had now unlimited command of the splendid fortune of twenty thousand pounds a-year. He immediately set in action the first movements of his great African scheme, and indeed had made arrangements for a preparatory tour in various parts of that region, and was about to leave England. Before he departed, however, for an absence of several years, he deemed it would be advisable to have a look at the Oxendon estate, and accordingly he wrote to the steward under whose management it was, that by a particular day he would visit the mansion.

On his arrival there he found on all hands, even from his own servants, ill-disguised expressions of surprise and disgust. But for all this he was prepared, and of course it did not so much move him. He did not mean to take up his residence among them, but merely to satisfy his mind as to what the property really was, and set it under strict management during his intended absence.

The river that flows in front of Oxenford winds round to the rear, inclosing it and the wood in the bending. Close to the margin of the water, on the other side of this, is a little old-fashioned well, a path

of about a mile long leading to it, nearly straight through the wood, from behind the house. The water has been long believed by the credulous to be gifted with specific qualities, among which a power of healing certain distempers in cattle stands pre-eminent.

A few days after Bruton's arrival he set out for a morning walk over his grounds, and took the path leading through the wood. As he approached the well, he saw a young female drawing a pitcher of water. The employment itself, and the girl's dress and attitudes, were all so classical, that he felt constrained to pause and admire them, aware that his near approach would likely drive her in awe, perhaps alarm, from her graceful occupation. As he stood, he was more and more struck with her beauty and simplicity ; he became conscious of a new feeling—something almost seemed, he said, to descend like a vapour about him and lend a different aspect to the woods, waters, and everything around. He was afraid to advance—really afraid—his fear being that the beautiful vision would be dispelled, and the pleasure he derived from it be brought to an end.

At last, having filled the pitcher several times, and emptied it in playful caprice into the flowing river

beside her, she seemed to have got a quantity that pleased her, and came gaily along, while the mellow sound of a horn, well played to a lightsome measure from the opposite bank, threw an additional enchantment around her as she moved.

Bruton met her, and begged to drink from her pitcher. She looked surprised—he could see evidence in her pretty, pale features of no other feeling—and held the pitcher to his mouth.

“Stay,” thought he, “she will pour out this that the blackamoor’s lip has polluted, and fill her vessel anew.” But, in place of such a proceeding, to his wonder, she smiled sweetly, courtesied, and seemed about to go. Oh, how novel and delicious was the emotion that that moment possessed him! He took from his watch a heavy gold chain of foreign workmanship, and threw it around her neck. The delighted girl went home and told the story of a strange black gentleman that had drunk from her pitcher at the Three Tree Well. That maid was Emily Mildmay, the servant at a little public-house called the Traveller’s Joy, at the village of Oxenford, about half a mile off, on the road to L——. The landlord and his wife informed her that this was the new lord of the

manor, the negro possessor of twenty thousand a-year, and assured her, examining with wonder the magnificent trinket, that her fortune was made.

Among those that listened in the inn kitchen were a young man in regimentals, who carried with him a French horn, and addressed the hostess by the name of mother,—a tall, thin, determined-looking female, the village midwife, and a negro beggar-woman, who stood asking alms at the door. The young soldier was a light-complexioned, good-looking lad, with a merry blue eye: Emily herself, pale, with dark eyes, and short, wavy black hair, sat upon his knee, treating him with fond familiarity. He was one of the band of the regiment quartered at L——, and had for some time been regarded as her favourite suitor.

They all recommended her to follow up her good fortune, and set her cap at the black squire; all, even the soldier, but as he did so he kissed her lips, and laughingly pressed her to him.

Next day she sought the well at the same hour as formerly. As she moved along the path to it she was met by a very aged black female, the beggar that had listened the day previous at the inn door—frightfully ugly—a perfect hag, with long, white hair,

contrasting hideously with the sooty blackness of her shrivelled negro features. This woman glared at her as she passed, with such a look, that she dropped her pitcher upon the stones, breaking it into fragments. She went on, however, as she could not think of turning to walk back after the horrible black witch. On reaching the well she perceived, through the trees by which it was surrounded, the blackamoor squire sitting on the stone facing the spring, apparently in much agitation. She spoke to him, and told him how she had broken her jug, and was afraid to go back alone. This, seeming to ask his protection, raised thoughts in his mind that had never existed there before, and in a few minutes she was amazed to hear him uttering to her strange words of vehement, almost frantic passion, half of which she could not hear for the convulsive stuttering that seemed to shake his whole frame, and the other half of which, though hearing she could not understand, so far beyond her capacity were both the words and their meaning. She knew, however, that the gentleman loved her ; that, the instinct of her sex made intelligible to her ; and when, after walking with her to the end of the path, detaining her till she could stay no longer, and making her engage

to meet him at the well next day, he put a well-filled purse into her hand, ideas of pride and pomp took possession of the poor girl's mind, and she became completely changed. The soldier was no more informed of what passed between them, nor did he much care, for he was a young man of somewhat libertine feelings and conduct; and she became haughty and careless, drinking in greedily the respect her master and mistress began to pay her. She was now daily with Bruton, and it was strange to know the subjects of their discourse. Her thoughts ran continually on being made a lady, mistress of the Grange, and of all the servants. Would she not have a coach to ride in, fine clothes to wear, wine to drink, and be able to do what she liked to all the tenants on the great estate of Oxenford? He again,—passionate and wild was his love as had been his ambition—as had been his woe at his own deformity—his dreams of reclaiming a continent. But was he happy in the mad delight of this new passion, in being *loved* as he persuaded himself? Oh, no, no; ten thousand times more bitterly did he curse his meeting Emily Mildmay at the charmed well than ever he had heaped maledictions on the father to whose sin he owed his deformity, or

the world who spurned him for it. His mind was one continual conflict of furious passions—pride, ambition, and perhaps fanaticism, uprooted and cast out by love. The one great thought, the single vast idea to which he had devoted the powers of a noble intellect—which had absorbed into itself all other prospects of youth—which had, he believed, been instilled into his mind by inspiration from the Almighty,—fighting on the one part; and, on the other, the love of woman. He was most miserable. At one time he resolved to flee from Oxenford, and go out at once in the pursuit of his great scheme to Africa. But leave *her*, the softest, the gentlest, the loveliest—who had smiled upon the deformed black, contemned by all else—who had loved the being all others abhorred? No, he would throw all to the winds—rebel against his destiny, and meet the punishment, if it only descended on his head pillowed upon the bosom of his idol.

At other seasons—chiefly in the bright daytime, he would be fresh in his original purpose, ready to devote his mind to the great theme that had erewhile occupied it; but as the noon wore over, and the evening fell, the more powerful passion arose, and he believed that the penalty of his deserting the purpose for which he

had been made, would be never-ending, yet he could not help yielding to the influence of the new and all-potent infatuation. The struggle was a fearful one, and his health was fast sinking under it.

All this was told me in his letters, in language a hundredfold more forcible than I have used. By the way, the change in their strain was most abrupt.

In one he had been informing me of reasons he had discovered for believing muriatic acid to be a compound of Phlogiston, and a new elementary substance; and two days after, I received another, lengthened out beyond all bounds of an epistle, containing a highly-coloured description of the natural beauties of Oxenford, and one still more glowing of soft Emily Mildmay, followed by an account of his encountering a woman whom he remembered in the West Indies, as accused of causing his father's death by Obi practices. It was altogether a most striking communication, but was followed by others, which any person unacquainted with the author, would have pronounced the work of a man of questionable reason.

At length came one urgently requesting me to come immediately to Oxenford, to be present at his marriage. As the session at college had been for some time

closed, I immediately took my passage by sea to L—, and arrived considerably before the appointed day. On my arrival, I became fully alive to the change in all his thoughts and habits, and to the violent struggle that was continually going on in his mind between his former and present ruling passion—the turmoil between ambition, superstition, love—ay, and jealousy.

For often as he was with her at the well and elsewhere, the distant sounds of the horn would reach his ear, and she would start and tremble at the sound—and how that horn would hover round whenever they were together! Moreover, on passing the inn, he had seen the young bandsman sporting with her among a crowd of other rustics. His state of mind, indeed, was anything but pleasurable.

The day of my arrival had now passed away, and, spent with my journey, I was luxuriating in one of the large old chairs by his library fireside, listening to him as he dilated on the perfections of his beloved, and wishing he would soon have done, that I might get to bed, when all at once he started up and insisted we should go together to the charmed well at the Three Trees, to see it.

In vain I urged want of curiosity, weariness, and the lateness of the hour ; he insisted, urged, and finally assured me that if I would not go, he would set out alone. There was some impalpable fascination, he said, drawing him, irresistibly as the force of fate. He then rushed from the apartment—I followed, and getting our hats, we went out through the back gate of Oxford Grange, and took our way by the footpath through the wood, he hurrying on, leading me by the arm, and I wondering what strange vagary was to come next.

It was near midnight, and very dark ; we moved rapidly along till I could hear the rushing of a body of water, and I knew we were near the river. Presently I saw the rays of a fire gleaming in that direction. At once I stopped, refusing to go further, alleging that this light might proceed from poachers, gipsies, or thieves, upon whom it would be anything but prudent to intrude at that hour.

“Though it be the blaze of —,” said he, “I must go on.” And letting go my arm, he sprang forward. I followed with caution, and approaching the light, beheld a scene of a most startling description, certainly.

In the midst of an open space, bounded by three immense gnarled trees, was a little well, having a

round basin and some fantastic ornaments of stonework, partly entire, and partly lying about in fragments, the water rippling away to the dark flowing river a few paces distant. Among the stones close by was a bright little fire, as if of resinous wood. Beside it sat a shape which I should assuredly have set down as a being of another world, had not my friend's letters enabled me to recognise the negro woman of Obi. She threw into it, from time to time, little bits of something, making it give out now rather a pleasing fragrance—anon, a stifling and most disgusting odour.

On the other side stood Bruton, dreadfully agitated, and trembling excessively. The blaze of the fire threw a ruddy and fantastic light on the group, illuminating the silvery white hair and dark visage of the frightful old negress, with its malevolent glare—the horror-stricken countenance and attitude of the almost equally hideous Bruton, and the twisted and knotted trunks and branches of the trees around,—while they spoke earnestly and violently together, these two creatures of another kind, in a language strange and uncouth as themselves. There was in the whole something extravagant, grotesque, and supernatural—something wild and fiendish, which made me quake as I stood rooted

to the spot in wonder, curiosity, and a feeling of mysterious dread.

After this had lasted a while, she rose from the ground, stretching out her frame till she looked as tall as himself, and chanting a kind of sing-song in the same gibberish, she kicked with her foot a few of the embers of her fire into the little basin of the fountain, and when the hissing and frothing had ceased, beckoned him to stoop and look into the water, as into a glass. He did so. I marked him at once fixed in horror; he continued to stare for a while, then starting up, he fled from the place with headlong speed, while she, kicking the remaining embers into the well, and producing total darkness, screamed after him some syllables exceedingly dissonant and harsh.

Thus left alone, darkling in a place where such strange proceedings had just been gone through, I dropped to the ground in a paroxysm of terror, unable to stir—indeed, all but insensible. It was nearly an hour before I recovered presence of mind sufficient to grope my way back, with a palpitating heart, to the Grange. I immediately retired to my chamber.

Next day I met my friend in the library. He had not slept all night. We had some coffee, and I pressed

him for an explanation of the events of the preceding night. With much ado I was enabled to piece together the following account :—

This Obi woman was one that had suffered grievously at his father's hands in the West Indies. A conspiracy had been formed among the negroes to take away his life, of which her only son was the ringleader. He was detected and put to death with extreme torture.

Shortly after, the planter was seized with a nervous disease of a mysterious nature, something partaking of the character of *tic douloureux*, which he accused her of having produced by charms. He had her repeatedly and severely flogged, and otherwise tormented, but still the disease advanced.

At first it consisted of a severe pain of one of his finger-joints, which his surgeon treated as gout. All remedies, however, proved unavailing, and the pain became so constant and agonizing, that he determined to have the joint removed.

This was done, but, strange to say, the pain immediately appeared in the next joint above. After a while the whole finger was taken away. This procured a little respite, but soon it recommenced with

increased severity in the wrist. Amputation of the fore-arm was resorted to—it attacked the elbow. The arm was cut off above that joint, when immediately the shoulder was seized, the pain becoming more excruciating the larger the joint it affected.

He now sank under the severity of the affection, which never intermitted, nor allowed a moment's rest or sleep; and, as he was dying in agony, he had the satisfaction of hearing the Obi woman whisper in his ear, that she had really by her incantations produced it, and would visit equally his children for what he had wrought upon her and hers.

“But what account did the surgeon give of this strange affection?”

“Oh, he accounted for it reasonably enough, having discovered, in inspecting the body, an exostotic spike growing from the atlas vertebra, and piercing the spinal marrow. But whether this really caused the pain or not, became a subject of divided opinion in the neighbourhood.

“It is indeed a most unaccountable superstition,” he continued—“my reason is against it, and yet my experience confirms it. I cannot believe in it, and yet I fear it. Did you mark how she drew me to the foun-

tain by a spell which I could no more resist than I can the force of gravitation?"

"Well, for my part, I should consider the encounter a matter of pure accident, taken advantage of by her to make you believe in her power and hold her in dread."

"No! I was forced from my house for an express purpose—to hear that temporal and eternal ruin is hovering over my head and about to stoop. I told her I knew it, and was prepared."

"Pooh—nonsense!" said I; "But what was it she showed you in the well that horrified you so much?"

"When I looked into the water, I seemed to behold before me a tropical landscape, arid with the perpendicular rays of a parching sun. There was an extensive field, from which the canes had been cut, and at a little distance were visible the sugar-works and a slave village. In the foreground I saw a kind of gibbet, from which hung a young negro; his left-hand was bound close to his side, and he was suspended by the thumb of his right. A sharp iron spike stood up from the ground to the level of his foot, which he had horribly lacerated upon it in the attempt to procure rest from the anguish of the suspension. Close to his face

were hung by a string, a piece of bread and a clear glass-bottle of water ; but when he attempted to reach them with his mouth, it was so arranged that they fell away from him and, rebounding, hit him smartly on the face. Such a contrivance—surely the fiend alone could have suggested ! He appeared to have tasted no water for days—hanging under that burning sun, nor any food, save his own flesh, for part of his right shoulder was gnawed away—”

“Oh, horrible !” I exclaimed ; “and the words the hag screamed after you as you went ?”

“Were—‘ *He was my only son !* ’”

“Then the Obi woman is excusable both in her revenge and imposture !”

And now the wedding-day came round. I recommended *delay*, and that the girl should be put under tuition for some time, to acquire habits and accomplishments suitable for his wife ; but he was imperious. He loved her for her ignorance and simplicity he said, and they were the causes of her love for him. Alas ! poor man, little did he know of the feelings of that thoughtless creature.

For my part, I appeared to be carried along in spite of my better judgment and the caution which I believe

is a prominent feature in my character ; and actually, in a few days after the last related events, found myself in the parish-church of Oxenford, giving away the bride.

That morning, on entering the library after dressing, I discovered him alone on his knees, praying aloud and much agitated. He rose and took my hand. His felt hot and dry—trembling in mine at the same time. I endeavoured to compose him, to appearance successfully, and the whole proceedings of the day passed with due decorum.

On emerging from the church, however, there were two individuals among the crowd of spectators, the sight of whom raised a commotion of feelings in the minds of both the principal parties. On one side stood the aged negro sorceress, holding out her skinny black claw as if for charity, while a malignant sneer seemed to crawl over the face of the hag. On the other the young bandsman formed the centre of a laughing group. He cast a look at her, as she passed, of a meaning that raised a new devil in the bosom of the mulatto.

For nearly a month after this, during which I pursued my studies in a remote corner of the large house

of Oxenford, poor Bruton's life was one continual ferment of changing passion. At one time he was madly overjoyed; soon he would be perfectly miserable, now pestering me to tell if I thought she really loved him, again struck to the lowest pitch of despondency by some unkind look or word, anon roused to all the madness of jealousy as the notes of the horn sounded from the neighbourhood of the house. He could not stay a moment from her presence. Everything his enormous fortune could indulge her in he put at her command.

I am convinced he would willingly have laid down his life to know for certain she loved him, for all along he had fits of doubt of it. At the same time, his former grand project would continually rise up, like the ghost of a murdered friend, to haunt him in the midst of his new habits. He had fears constantly tormenting him of some dreadful dispensation hanging over him; not that he cared for it if it lighted on himself; but if it should involve *her*, there lay the pang.

But at length the truth began to appear; Emily grew wearied of her situation, its novelty and other charms were gone, and she began to show unequivocal symptoms of disgust at the person and presence of her negro lord, and to pine and mope alone—to shun his

society. And at last, she positively refused longer to share his bed or board unless compelled.

All this was plain to him long before I became aware of it, and its effects upon him yet exceeded in vehemence all the displays of passion I had seen him exhibit. He would go to the door of the apartment in which she had shut herself up, and, kneeling on the outside, would implore, in the most abject terms, admission to her presence, the impediment in his speech rendering such entreaties as disagreeable to hear as his features and gestures were to look at. Presently he might be heard screaming awful curses through the door at the terrified creature within, and immediately perhaps crying out that for her he had broken the machinery of fate, forsaken the cause of his species, and thrown up the work that Heaven had given him to do.

I remember he rushed one day into the room in which I was sitting, actually reeling under the influence of extreme passion, frantic rage, and jealousy. There was a very magnificent mirror in the apartment, affording a complete view of the figure. His reflection in this caught his eye, when starting, he flew at it, and, yelling aloud, dashed the glass into fragments with his fists with all the fury of a roused maniac. When he

had completely demolished it, he tore the massive frame from the wall, and, stamping on the ruin he had made, fell into a chair and gave way to a burst of hysterical weeping.

At the beginning of this scene I thought he had actually lost his reason, and looked toward the door for my own safety; as soon, however, as the fit had exhausted itself, he became calm, and beckoned me to come to him. Taking out my pocket-case of instruments, I extracted from his hands the bits of glass, and dressed and bound them up. I wanted him to go to his room, but he went out and wandered about the fields all the rest of the day.

But now a new hope arose to him—Emily was about to be a mother. He became once more overjoyed. He would now indeed have a being of his own flesh to love, and to be loved withal. Its little eyes could not be shocked at his ugliness, nor would its heart wander away from him to any other object. But again rose the bitter doubt—would not it be also like himself, a hideous mulatto? It would; but would he love it the less for that? No, ten thousandfold more rapturously would he hug the deformed darling to his heart.

Every suitable preparation was made for such an event, and all with the utmost anxiety and attention. The midwife of the village, the woman I have before alluded to, was hired as nurse to remain constantly at Oxenford, myself being at hand as medical attendant.

The child was born—no negro, but a fair and beautiful blue-eyed boy. Then I thought of the pale face and dark eyes and hair of its mother, and the midnight blackness of her husband, and I trembled for what would happen.

I made excuses to keep it from his sight for several days : at length, one day, in spite of all my precautions, he burst into the apartment where his wife lay, attended by myself and the woman. This person immediately placed it in his hands ; he received it with rapture, gazed at its little face, seemed surprised, stunned, looked from it to his wife, and then, on a sudden, while his eyes seemed to glow like coals of fire, and every feature of his face was convulsed with passion, he stepped back with one foot, and raised the screaming infant above his head as if to dash it to the ground.

That instant the mother sprang from her couch, and

flew at his throat like a tigress, whilst I caught hold of the child. He yielded it to me, and then striking her a furious blow that laid her bleeding on the floor, he rushed from the house, and staid in the fields the rest of the day.

I must own I was now beginning to feel heartily tired of my residence with Bruton. His society was certainly most acceptable at the university, where his talent and originality, and the excitement that seemed continually to hover round wherever he bore his enthusiastic nature, formed an agreeable relief to the monotony of every-day life.

Here, however, all was excitement, and that, too, of a most painful kind, not a day passing but what was marked by some violent scene of high-wrought passion. Life seemed altogether a fevered and unnatural dream—a continued tragic drama, and I began to feel myself, I thought, losing the habits and feelings of ordinary society, and becoming unfitted to take my place in the world as a matter-of-fact man.

Impressed with thoughts of this nature, I resolved to leave Oxenford and proceed to London, to seek a situation suitable to my prospects in life, and for the future to mingle no more in the concerns of such a

being as my present host. With such resolutions I sought my chamber.

Shortly after midnight a cry went up throughout the old house of Oxenford, that the child was dead—dead and cold in its mother's bosom. I was aroused by fearful sounds all through the building, and a loud and furious knocking at my bed-room door. Hurrying on my clothes, I hastily followed the servant who had called me, and, half-way to the mother's apartment, I met her, frantic, undressed, and dishevelled, rushing along with her dead infant in her arms, calling wildly upon me for help, and vehemently accusing her husband of the crime of murder. Half asleep and bewildered, I could scarce credit my senses, or resolve upon the steps most proper to be taken.

Upon this the mother, fiercely accusing me of ignorance and incapacity, thrust it to me, and then, expressing a doubt whether even I might not have a hand in the deed, drew it to her once more, and, pressing the corpse to her breast, threw her eyes wildly upward, calling for succour from that quarter, where alone, she said, she had any hope now.

With what soothing expressions I could muster up,

I led the way hurriedly to her room, and desiring the nurse, who alone seemed to possess coolness and presence of mind, instantly to remove all dress from the body, examined it carefully, without perceiving any the least trace of violence. But there was one damning circumstance, a *smell* which I fondly tried to convince myself was illusory, and which, when but too palpable to my sense, made me sweat cold, as I pronounced the fatal word—

“POISON!”

Without the vestige of a hope, I desired them to place the child in a warm bath, into which mustard had been sprinkled, and to use ammonia and other stimulants. It was of no avail, as I expected, for the child was already stone dead.

But how shall I paint the bereaved mother thus robbed in the dark of her offspring. Frantic and furious, with flushed swollen face and glowing eyes, she raved and stormed—now pouring dreadful curses upon her husband, her servants, and myself—now uttering unmeaning cries of lamentation, and presently calling aloud to Heaven for help and for vengeance. Her voice was at first loud and piercing, but as she went on, it became dry, husky, unnatural, and

most harrowing to hear. Then she would fling herself into a chair—start up, rush across the room, her hair dishevelled and her dress loose, clapping her hands and beating her breast—then flee to the bed whereon lay the child, and clasp it to her heart, and cover it with kisses. Anon she dashed her head against the wall, then flung herself with reckless violence to the floor, and rolled about the carpet ; finally, springing up and throwing herself on the bed, and covering her face with her fingers, her palms pressed against her temples, as if to keep her head from being rent by excess of agony, she gasped out low, heart-splitting groans, the only outward vent exhausted nature had now left her for overcharging affliction.

Amidst this wild wailing, the dark secrets of her heart were poured freely forth ; no more worth concealing now ! and she shrieked aloud that no drop of that black monster's blood stagnated in the pulseless heart of her darling. No—the offspring it was of deep and passionate guilt—secret and soul-cherished—love-stolen and sweet—long nursed, and fondly and darkly indulged—a passion of youth,—fervent and uncontrollable.

But what new horror is this? What dark spectre is it that stands in the unlighted passage, glaring in upon the scene through the half-opened door, listening to this frenzied confession?—It is the negro! Slowly he advanced into the chamber, with a ghastly hue overshadowing his hideous face, and those eyes gleaming as if they were two living intelligences separate from the rest of his being. Is that a smile—that fearful change that passed across his features? What must have been the thoughts that could produce a look like that, even in such a face?

There is a sound of something behind him in the dark passage!—Heaven be our shield! what is it? Three affrighted domestics stagger in half-dressed, bearing a body. It is clothed in a red coat, bedizened with gaudy trappings, its face covered with blood, flowing from among the light hair, half of which is now one wet, red, solid mass. It is—it is—the soldier!—Emily's bandsman—the father of that innocent whose spirit has so lately flown upward.

Bruton advances towards his wife, his face one black scowl of demoniac rage. Now he points to the body of the soldier, now to that of the child—he essays to speak—but that impediment, that stutter

opposes, and he gasps spasmodically—the white froth flowing over his sooty lips like foam on the billows of a stormy midnight.

She!—does she quail in her consciousness of guilt before that dreadful stare?—No!—rising up in the bed, her black hair streaming about—her face pale as death, and shining with sweat, she returns it with a reckless look of fierce defiance. She cannot speak, she is too weak and spent for that, but her jaws moving convulsively, give utterance to a gibbering sound, and she makes as if she would tear him with her hands.

Thus they remained for some seconds—when suddenly he staggered, turned round and round, and dropped to the floor. Thereupon she slid over the edge of the bed, and, holding on by the post, spurned his body with her foot.

Was not this a trying situation for me? For the last few minutes I had been fixed—petrified, I may almost say—with horror—my eyeballs actually ached from the moveless gaze I had unconsciously fixed upon the scene. I was now utterly confounded, and felt constrained to ejaculate a prayer for assistance and direction.

I immediately raised his body, and from the stertorous breathing, state of the pulse and pupils, and other symptoms, concluded a fit of apoplexy had caught him, from congestion of the brain, caused by excess of passion and his violent attempts at articulation. In this belief, I forthwith took from his arm about a pound and a half of blood, and had him removed to his chamber, when other depletive measures were had recourse to.

I now directed my attention to the soldier. To my surprise he was alive—breathing, but insensible. I had his head washed, and found a long wound behind the ear; the probe introduced discovered a depressed plate of bone and some loose spiculæ.

I had now enough upon my hands, you will allow. I took command of the household upon myself, the terrified servants obeying my directions as if glad to hear a word of ordinary meaning spoken in that house. I had the soldier removed to another apartment, and proper measures resorted to for preserving in him the little life that remained. Returning to the lady's chamber I found her laid down, quite worn out and exhausted, breathing as if asleep, but perfectly awake. I left her under the care of the midwife, or nurse.

And here, let me remark, that the bearing of this woman had all along been singularly calm and collected, so as altogether to put me to shame for my own want of nerve. Her stoical coolness and indifference astonished me—I laid them to long experience in her profession.

Next morning, I sent information of these occurrences to the authorities, and to the medical officers of the hospital at L ——. They arrived and entered upon their several duties.

Three or four days after, Bruton was pronounced convalescent, but with the complete and irretrievable loss of his speech, the apoplectic seizure having terminated in paralysis of the nerves of one side of his face, and also of the ninth pair or motor nerves of his tongue. The result was a frightful addition to, or rather change of his deformity, his face appearing wrenched forcibly awry, whilst his tongue lay in his mouth moveless, as a foreign body, protruding between the great black lips. His one eye again he could not close, it remained open, staring, and glassy, and he required every now and then to press the lid over it with his finger, to moisten the aching ball.

A few days more and he could leave his bed, but it

was only to enter a jail, having been committed by the coroner for the wilful murder of the child, and a murderous assault upon Hughes, the bandsman, his wife's paramour.

I continued at Oxenford, having from Bruton a written request to take the management of his affairs till his acquittal; for the paper assured me—after a pathetic appeal to me as his only friend, the sole being who had ever borne regard for him—that he was altogether innocent of both the foul crimes laid to his charge. I knew not whether to credit this or not; at all events I resolved to fulfil the request, conscious that, except my own, every man's hand was against the unhappy mulatto.

And now at length came on the day of his trial. I was present, a medical witness, and as such was allowed to sit in court throughout the whole proceedings.

The jail at L—— is a large, heavy building of stone; the court-hall occupies about one-half of its sombre front. This hall is of the shape of the old Greek theatres—indeed the architect had this idea in its plan. One side of it is square, containing the bench, bar, jury, and witness boxes; the other side stretches out in a semicircular shape, inclosing a wide

space filled with tiers of seats of a similar form. The wall contains several large, long windows, opening into two dim courtyards, around which may be seen the caged and grated loopholes of the prison cells. The interior, ceiling and all, is painted to resemble a dark-coloured stone, of which the shell of the edifice is constructed. A massive chandelier of bronze hangs from the ceiling ; the bench and tables are of black carved oak ; in short, the whole has a dim and dusky aspect, very gloomy and forbidding.

This hall was crowded to excess the morning of the trial, nearly half the audience consisting of females, many of them appearing to be of high station in life.

A few minor cases were first got over, the culprits admitting the charges against them and being sentenced to imprisonment, and short terms of transportation. At last, his name was called, and he was led to the bar. The moment he appeared, a shudder of horror ran through the audience, in which the members of the court participated. Among the former this changed into a buzz of low talking, becoming louder and louder, till at last several women shrieked aloud and were conveyed away, and many started up and left the hall ; carrying, to the crowds outside, accounts of the mon-

strous aspect of the criminal. These reports, exaggerated if such were possible, were borne about the city, and gave rise to a feeling, such as, I believe, could never have pervaded any community before or since. It consisted of curiosity, wonder, and horror, mingled with a mysterious supernatural dread, all most intense, and forming what might be called a mental epidemic.

For a while all was confusion and uproar throughout the vast hall; those whose business it was to preserve order being equally excited with the rest. At length the venerable judge, who appeared for a time to have yielded to the general feeling, rose to his feet, and there was a sudden and universal stillness, and the officers of the court, recovering themselves, bawled aloud their monotonous "Silence!" Thereupon order ensued, and the business of the day proceeded.

The charge was read, and Bruton's written pleading of "Not Guilty."

In this declaration he stated, he was utterly ignorant how either of the deaths had occurred; that he had been, according to his custom, walking alone about midnight in his grounds at Oxenford, when he discovered the body of the soldier lying, wounded and

senseless, close to that wing of the house in which his wife resided ; whereupon he had immediately called his servants and bade them carry it to the house.

When the reading of this was over, there was another murmur among the assemblage of people, wishing that one so ugly should be hung immediately, without a trial—others fervently expressing their hopes he would not escape conviction—and others merely uttering aloud their horror and disgust.

It was with a peculiar—a nameless mixture of feelings, that I looked at and listened to this, aware as I was that that being, the object of it all, possessed an intellect in extent and power as much above those of all around—bench, bar, and audience—as was the serpent-staff of the prophet Moses over the charmed rods of the Egyptian soothsayers.

As the trial proceeded, his wife was called to give her testimony. She caught sight of him as she was ascending the witness-box, and, as she did, she stumbled on the last step and fell forward. She was assisted up to her feet, and stood up blanched and trembling before the court. Her young and winning aspect, pale, pretty features, black eyes, and evenly-braided hair, won the sympathy of all around, even

though a tale of her deep guilt, which was well known, was that day to be told, haply, by her own lips.

Short and simple was her story. She went to sleep, and in the middle of the night awoke to find her baby cold in her bosom. There was a strong odour throughout the room as of bruised *laurel-leaves*, and presently she could perceive a horrible negro face grinning at her through the partly open door. This, as well as her husband's continual threats and jealous and revengeful conduct, immediately led her to conclude him to be the perpetrator of the crime.

On being cross-questioned, she said she could give no reason for having married the mulatto, but believed she must have been influenced by *witchcraft*. Upon this, there was a whispering among the audience—of incredulity and ridicule from some, but from most of wonder and awe. I watched Bruton as she said it. He moved his head—I followed his gaze, and almost shivered as I saw it rest upon the Obi sorceress, who, dressed in an old dark shawl and faded bonnet, with a thick black veil, sat close by a pillar, apparently unregarded by any, but observing with deep attention the progress of the trial.

The cross-examination continued.

On being questioned with regard to Hughes, the horn-player, she became confused, stammered, wept, and held down her head, and, on certain queries being pressed home, bent forward upon the rail of the box, covered her face with her hands and trembled violently, even so as to make a thin wooden sounding-canopy, which stood up over the box on two slender iron rods, vibrate perceptibly.

A murmur as of pity ran over the crowd, and the judge informed her that she need answer no question tending in any degree to criminate or injure herself.

A few more were urged, to none of which she made any reply, and finally, being told she might leave the box, she actually fell out of it, and would have been hurt, had she not been caught in the arms of the attendant officer, and borne from the hall.

Other unimportant witnesses were examined, their evidence tending to elucidate matters occurring previous to the marriage. Then the nurse or midwife was called, and, as she ascended the box, a murmuring sound again pervaded the assemblage.

“Ah!” said one near me, “here is a smart woman—she will give a succinct and intelligible account—no nonsense about her.”

And a succinct enough evidence she did give.

“I was sitting,” said she, “half dozing, beside my young mistress’s bed, concealed by the curtains, when my attention was roused by seeing her husband come stealthily into the room. He held something in his hand; presently I saw it was a syringe with a long beak, and it appeared charged with some liquor. Removing the bedclothes from about the head of the infant, he put the beak of the syringe to its mouth, when presently it began to suck it—”

Here several women shrieked suddenly, and there was much commotion.

“— In a little time he covered up the child and withdrew, the mother continuing to sleep soundly. I could not imagine what he had been doing, and did not stir. In a few minutes she awoke abruptly, and we found it quite dead.”

As this woman delivered her testimony, Bruton seemed much agitated; at last he sprang to his feet, with violent gestures, but presently, being pushed down by the bar-officers one on each side, he seemed to recover a sense of propriety, and sat still, though he looked all around him, now here and now there, starting abruptly, as if greatly excited.

In answer to further interrogation, she stated that he lingered looking in at the door till the mother awoke; also that she had been sensible all this while of a strong odour pervading the room, which she compared to that of *bitter almonds*.

No cross-questioning could alter one tittle of this plain tale, and finally she was complimented from the bench upon the clear and direct evidence she had given. Upon this she curtsied and left the box, but, in place of going out of the court, she sat down on the edge of a step, as if actuated by a curiosity to hear out the issue of the trial.

The landlord of the village inn was now called forward. Part of his evidence was to this effect:—He was not really the father of the bandsman, as was commonly supposed, never having had any child of his own. He had formerly been in good circumstances, and was at one time a pawnbroker at L——: at that period, which was about twenty or more years past, while he was in attendance at his place of business, one day, a man came in wanting to pledge a riding-whip. Whilst this occupied him, a woman, apparently much agitated, entered another of the stalls of his counter, and stated her desire to borrow a sovereign

upon the pledge of a ring. As he spoke with her, the man appeared to become impatient, and called him away. Having despatched the business of the whip, he went to attend on the woman. No woman he found, however, but an infant lying asleep upon the counter—neither the woman nor the man ever returned again. He experienced much difficulty in his attempts to have the child transferred to the parish, and, while these were going on, the little creature had got so endeared both to his wife and himself, that finally they resolved to adopt and rear it as their own. Shortly after, a fire, and consequent litigation with an Assurance company, reduced him in circumstances, and finally, about three years before, he became a publican, and rented the inn of the “Travellers’ Joy.” The boy grew up, but, being of a wild and roving disposition, enlisted and became a bandsman in the regiment at L——. The wife of the prisoner had been his servant at the inn for about two years.

About the middle of this narrative I felt a sudden and powerful grip upon my left arm, above the elbow, that made me all but cry out with pain. Turning round, I beheld the midwife sitting on the step close behind me. Her lips were open and grinning, her

teeth pressed together, while her eyeballs seemed about to spout from their sockets, the eyelids being drawn tightly back so as to show the white all round the staring pupils. The middle finger of her left hand was pressed against her forehead, while with her right she clutched my arm, apparently taking it for one of the supports of the witness-box beside us. With some difficulty I disengaged her hold. She seemed to recollect herself, got up, and staggered, rather than walked, along the passage and out of the court.

The landlady was next called, and but corroborated her husband's story. The servants came next, their statements having a strong tendency to convict him of the assault upon the soldier, and also to prove the regular and systematic infidelity of his wife all along.

Then were called up the gentlemen who had inspected the body of the infant. One of them was a surgeon; the other also of that rank, but in addition an eminent practical chemist. The latter stated that he had taken from its mouth, throat, and stomach about an ounce of a fluid, which, even upon its first presentation to his senses, he recognised as strongly impregnated with PRUSSIC ACID.

He then gave an account of taking this to his labora-

tory, locking it up where no one had access but himself, with other proceedings usual in such cases, and of finally experimenting upon it in the presence of the other medical witnesses. All the experiments, which he went over in detail, were conclusive as to the fact that this poison formed a fearfully large proportion of the liquor, and finally he exhibited to the court a bit of Prussian blue pigment made from it in one of the processes—a piece of paper stained with which was handed to the jury.

The other surgeon deposed that he had seen the experiments performed by the chemist, and concurred with him in every particular. On being asked how long the infant could have lived after the administration of the acid, he answered,

“About two seconds, probably.”

He further stated that it acted altogether upon the nervous system, producing effects on the body similar to those caused by lightning.

And now came my turn.

I was the last examined, and was kept more than two hours in the box. The foregoing narrative may be taken as a counterpart of the account I gave. Bruton listened to me calm and unmoved till the end. He

seemed to expect that my evidence should completely exculpate him. Alas! it only went still further to convince the crowd around of what they had already prejudged.

I testified to his extensive chemical knowledge, and to the fact that Prussic acid had been but lately discovered, and was exceedingly difficult to prepare, except by experienced hands.

I also identified a number of the "Philosophical Transactions" as part of his library. It opened at a page containing a new process for the distillation of the acid, and this was the only part of the number where the leaves were cut.

It would be tedious to detail the rest of that trial. It was far in the night when the jury retired to consult together upon their verdict. In about two minutes they returned, unanimously finding him guilty of both the charges preferred against him.

Thereupon the judge arose, and, taking the black cap, drew it slowly upon his head.

At that moment Bruton sprang up in a state of excitement violent yet beyond any I had hitherto seen him possessed by. He waved his arms and gesticulated wildly, making spasmodic efforts to speak, seem-

ing now desirous of addressing the bench, now turning round to the audience, anon tossing his black hands madly aloft, as if appealing to Heaven in the paroxysm of his frantic and utter despair. The crowd around rose to their feet and stood up upon the seats and window-sills. There were cries of pain, of fear, and for air, becoming louder and louder, and a crushing toward the doors: all became confusion and uproar—the glass was dashed from the windows to let the cold breeze of night in upon the tumultuous court, whose atmosphere felt hot, moist, and stifling.

Then might be heard the shrieks of women, and the shouts and curses of men, all in commotion and struggling together, but above all arose the strange and unnatural bellowings of the prisoner in his frenzy. But what were sounds, however frightful, to the hideous gestures and most appalling aspect of the deformed and dumb negro, palsied and convulsed, vainly striving to make his powerless muscles answer to the mandates of the agonised and labouring spirit within?

Reader, you have seen in the streets a strong man struck to the ground by that most fearful of diseases, epilepsy, and have gazed with a mixture of interest and terror upon the writhings of the suffering

wretch. Imagine him a negro—horribly distorted naturally, conscious of the state he is in, and wildly endeavouring to express his torment. Imagine also a being about to strike him dead, and that he knows this and cannot escape. Let these ideas settle in your mind for a moment, and you may conceive the feelings with which I regarded the scene before me.

I felt sick, cold, and weighed down as if there was some vast mass pressing the spirit from out of my body ; my knees became weak and unstable, and I fell forward upon the broad table in front of the bench, and saw and heard no more.

On recovering consciousness, I perceived the bar and bench empty ; the crowd had nearly dispersed, and the legal gentlemen were packing up their papers around the table on which I lay. One of the officers stood beside me, and after a little I understood I was wanted, as a medical man, to see some people that had been hurt in the court, and one that had fainted and could not be recovered.

It was some time before I felt strong enough to go to the room where they were. I found the former persons under the hands of my professional brethren, and the latter was sitting up, vomiting. The trial was

over : sentence of death had been passed upon the mulatto, and he was in the condemned cell.

With a heavy heart indeed I left the sombre County Buildings, and took my way to my apartments in the town.

Next day I obtained admission to the cell. Bruton lay along on the raised stones which served for a sleeping-place, perfectly insensible. A second stroke of apoplexy had seized him during that fit of awful excitement in the bar at his trial.

As I stood looking on, my mind involuntarily reverted to another scene to which I had been called professionally a few days before. It was the wreck of a magnificent steam-engine at a factory in the neighbourhood of L——. There appeared to my mind an exceedingly forcible analogy between the twisted beams and broken wheels and cylinders of the dark and massive machine thus burst asunder by the mighty vapour that had been chained within it, and the powerless and senseless, the wrenched and blasted frame, too frail to bear the workings of the strong, restless, and uncontrollable spirit whose vehicle it had been. Life was slowly ebbing from his body, and in another day its presence was no more perceptible—he was dead.

And thus perished one, whose name, but for an overpassionate nature, would now, I am convinced, be flourishing in other pages than those of a fugitive romance.

A few days after, a situation became open to me which I considered of a peculiarly advantageous description. It was to travel on the continent as medical companion to a young nobleman of delicate health. I immediately accepted it and left England. After two years' absence I returned home and commenced practice at L——. Shortly after my arrival, a medical friend, in conversation, recalled to my mind the events of this narrative.

I found from him that circumstances of a most extraordinary nature had taken place in continuation. Immediately on the death of Bruton a claim to his property was preferred by that sister—that daughter of old Bruton's—to whose character and misconduct I have made allusion in an early part of the story. All this was what might be expected, and in the regular and probable course of things, and I only wondered where and how this person had disposed of herself so long.

But what was my amazement when I found that,

after remaining for more than twenty years in poverty and obscurity, she had on a sudden come to light in the person of the midwife at Oxenford, the very woman who had been so intimately mingled with the final occurrences of my poor fellow-student's career. Yes, there she was, living at the Grange, the mistress of an extensive establishment. I was in doubt—surely it must be some other woman! And her name, too! Rundle was the name the midwife called herself! Yes, but that was the name of the footman with whom she eloped. Yes, it is—it must be the same!

And yet not one whit was my wonder lessened. There was a mystery, an intricacy, a confounding together of cause and effect in the whole matter that puzzled me extremely. At the same time, my mind became filled with a maze of doubts, suspicions, and ideas of old events, which I felt myself unable to arrange so as to draw from them any intelligible conclusion.

It appeared that Bruton had been condemned chiefly on the evidence of his own sister, whom no one then knew to be such, but who was herself well aware of the fact. What! had she no motive for giving evidence exaggerated—false? The idea struck me, and imme-

diately a long string of thoughts rose up in my mind in rapid succession, giving a different complexion to the whole of the circumstances of the case.

My feelings of interest were fairly excited, and I redoubled inquiry on inquiry. At length I asked with regard to the soldier, of whose ulterior fate I had hitherto been ignorant. In addition to claiming Oxenford as her property, she had claimed him as her son, calling him by the name she now assumed herself.

This was a matter of new surprise, and of new difficulty and doubt: how strangely did it complicate the maze of crime and punishment! I felt bewildered as the events seemed to flit, change, and interweave before me. She it was who had entered the pawnbroking-house, and left the child, as the publican deposed; and he, the footman—her husband, as she averred—was the man who occupied his attention while she accomplished the desertion of her offspring.

And now my mind reverted to the day of the trial, and I remembered the clutch with which she caught my arm as the innkeeper detailed the history of the bandsman: that I felt convinced was her first discovery of her son since his abandonment.

There was no other claimant to the property, im-

mense as it was—for old Strangways himself was a being who had never known any relation, and had raised himself to wealth from the lowest obscurity. This being the case, and she being plentifully supplied with proofs of her identity, she entered without opposition into possession.

She immediately caused the soldier to be discharged from his regiment, and had him removed from the little inn to her house, where all the talent that wealth could command was put in requisition toward his restoration to health. But here I was informed of another strange particular, though not without parallel on medical record. He lay at Oxenford now in the very precise state in which he was borne into the chamber on that fearful night when the infant was poisoned. Up to this time, senseless and moveless, breathing, but not living, nor yet dead, he lay, and had lain for two long years.* The wound in his head was still open. All unconscious he was, however, and powerless. No natural function could he perform of

* There is a case mentioned, I think, in one of Dr. Combes' books, of a sailor wounded in action in the Mediterranean, who continued utterly unconscious for a period of nine months, during a protracted passage to England, and who was restored as in the tale. Many similar cases are to be found in medical works.

himself. He could not eat or drink ; food to sustain vitality, required to be pushed far back into the throat, which carried it down to the stomach by what is called reflex action, a nervous power known to scientific men, and altogether independent of will or consciousness.

I inquired whether no operation had been thought of with a view to relieving the brain from the compression, which was plainly the cause of his present state. I was told that this had frequently been resolved upon by various consultations, but had as often been deferred at the urgent request of the lady of Oxenford, on the ground of her fears for the result. Indeed, I now learned that this woman, who during my connexion with her preserved in the most trying situations a coolness and nerve which I envied, did now display, in everything with regard to her new found son, a most excitable, indeed, hysterical state of feeling—an intensity of emotion hardly accountable.

In a day or two the medical gentleman I have alluded to, at my express request had me called to a consultation at Oxenford. The lady recognised me immediately. She became very pale, and in welcoming me to the house stammered as she spoke. Her former masculine, determined bearing was com-

pletely gone, and its place was now usurped by an anxious, suspicious, yet forward expression that seemed to say, "Who accuses me?"

She drew the conversation herself to her former rank in life, and to the events that had happened at Oxenford, and seemed particularly desirous to impress me with the idea that she could talk upon them with perfect freedom and unconcern; while all the time I could see that she trembled upon every syllable I uttered, looking at me as if she would read my inmost thoughts. Frequently, too, she would give utterance to a word or an expression which she would be particularly at pains to retract. Her manner, in fine, in place of setting my suspicions at rest, as was intended, only served to render them stronger and yet more conflicting.

My presence seemed to have transported her back to the period when her brother was in possession of the Grange. As we talked of her son—"Oh, would to God," she cried, "I had known it then—what a world of misery it would have saved. Oh! curse the witch that could not—would not tell me—and myself not to see it! A mother not to know her own son! Oh, Doctor C——, I never had another child!"

I told her I did not see how such knowledge could have altered in any degree the events that had occurred.

“Ah, it is true,” she answered; “but I might have come between him and that girl, and so he should not have fallen into the hands of that black monster that has murdered him—murder—mur—der—what a strange word that is, doctor—I mean—it must be terrible—to think—one’s own—only—”

And her voice died away in a succession of unconnected syllables, while her face grew deadly pale, and appeared lengthened, and her eyes glared wildly, even as she had looked at that point of the trial to which I have before referred. In a little this was over.

“I beg your pardon, gentlemen,” said she; “I am rather nervous—I was always so; and my late very great change of habits, and the resuming of that rank in life to which I was born and educated, after so long a period of poverty and struggle, have rendered me much more so.”

My friend, whose time was of importance to him, here begged us to go to the chamber where the patient lay. I found him pale and much wasted, lying extended on his back. Dr. —— felt his pulse,

and applied a thermometer to his arm-pit, making a memorandum of the results ; and after a conversation purely professional, we came to the decision that the operation of the trephine should be employed, as the sole means of restoring him as an intelligent being to the world.

This decision I myself was deputed to convey to the mother, as each of the other gentlemen had done it often before.

I know not to what cause to lay it, I never was much famed for eloquence, I must confess ; but I actually got her at length to consent that the operation should take place as soon as we thought proper—at least when I suggested this, she offered no objection. In fact, the presence of one so intimately connected with the former events of her life, seemed to have completely quelled her spirit. She asked me if I had ever known any cases of an analogous nature ? I told her I had read of several, but had never in my own experience met with any that approached it nearly.

Would he have any knowledge of what had occurred during the period of his apparent sensibility ? I said I had heard of cases where people in such states heard what was going on around them, but could give no

indication of it. Was the operation very dangerous? was there much chance of his surviving it? I stated that the danger to life was imminent; but that at all events it was better to run the risk than to have him continue in the state in which he was.

Would he recollect perfectly all that had happened before the injury, even up to its infliction? I had read of several cases wherein a patient, after recovering from such a state, had no recollection of any thing at all, but was as one newly born, and had to begin over again the very rudiments of education.

At this she appeared to brighten up—as the expression is—considerably. It seemed to please her more than any other thing that had been mentioned, and she now begged that we would come to-morrow, if all things were suitable, and perform the operation, in order at once to get over the suspense. To this I immediately consented, and next day was named for it. My medical friends were surprised at this, but expected that next day some reason would be offered for deferring it as formerly.

Next day we arrived, and found the lady firm in her purpose, and willing that we should proceed. Singularly enough, her old determined energetic manner

was once more assumed as perfectly as I had ever seen it. We all remarked it.

The house of Oxenford consisted of two portions, forming the two sides of a right angle. One of these, called properly the Grange, was old, with high crow-stepped gables and tall chimneys, small windows, and curious cornices of brick; the other was quite modern, looking like a substantial country-house, and was of stone. In a room of the latter lay our patient—now the former had been the favourite division, and in it I stayed when I was at the Grange. Into it, preparatory to the operation, were sent the servants and all hangers-on about the house, no one remaining in the modern half save the lady, ourselves, and our assistants.

The patient was removed from the bed on which he usually lay, to a low couch, which was wheeled to a window, the voluminous curtains having been removed to allow every ray of light to enter that could. The cold-water dressings that were kept continually applied to his shaven head, were taken away, and the trephine was put in action.

This is an instrument of the figure of a corkscrew, armed at the end with a saw of a ring shape, which

cuts out a circular bit from any flat bone. A round hole is the consequence, through which may be evacuated any matter it is necessary should be removed. In this case a steel lever was introduced, and the fractured and depressed portion of bone raised and extracted.

The moment the weight was lifted from the brain, the patient, heaving a deep sigh, opened his eyes, sat up and stared wonderingly around him. He then raised his hand and rubbed his eyes, and looked at the bed he lay on, and then at us all, his motions being performed slowly and with much effort, as if his muscles were grown unused to their function. His pulse rose rapidly: I had my finger on his wrist. He appeared surprised and excited. At length he recognised me, and regarded me for some time with a puzzled look.

“Ah, Doctor C——,” said he; “am I much hurt? It was a d—l of a knock I had *last night*; I feel so weak, I can hardly move; I suppose I bled a great deal. Is it my head?”

“Yes,” said I, “it is your head. Don’t touch it. So you had better compose yourself; lie down and be quiet, and you will be all right soon.”

“Where am I? What house is this? Take me to the alehouse. Has anybody told the old woman yet?”

“No; I believe not.”

There was a long pause.

Having dressed his head once more, we retired to another room to converse upon the case.

It appeared that the two years that had passed were to him a total blank, and he seemed to consider himself but a night older. He talked of the landlady of the inn as his mother, and was anxious to know whether she knew of what had befallen him. Indeed, it was another most marked and peculiar fact to add to the list of phenomena in connexion with nervous physiology. For my part, I resolved to experiment upon him so as to satisfy my mind upon several points about which doubts are generally entertained, such as the following:

It is a belief of some, especially those who deny the separate existence of mind, that in deep sleep, in compression of the brain and some other states, thought is entirely absent; in fact, that the mind is annihilated. Others hold that that mental chain philosophers call the association of ideas—that series in which thoughts cause and are followed by other

thoughts in continual succession, never intermits in any circumstances—commencing with birth, flowing on link after link, through sleep and waking, health and disease, and broken only by death, or the separation of the mind in which it takes place from the body; no! not broken, but carried on into another state of existence. My experience with him leant in favour of the latter hypothesis. I asked him if during the night he had dreamt much.

“No, not any.”

“What, have you no recollection of any dream the whole night through?”

“Yes, there is in my mind a faint recollection of some very *sweet, simple, and plaintive music*, not like that of any instrument I know, but very beautiful.”

Before this the other gentlemen, who had large practices, and whose time was very valuable, had withdrawn. I now sought the lady of the house. She darted at me, as I entered the drawing-room, a look of intense anxiety; but, resuming her cold and resolute aspect—

“Have you been successful, doctor?” said she.

“Successful, madam, beyond our warmest wishes.”

“Is he sensible?”

“He is.”

“Does he recollect anything?”

“The period since the injury appears to him has passed but as a night’s sleep, but he recollects perfectly the events that occurred close before receiving the injury, and mentions them as having happened yesterday.”

“Mentions, doctor! mentions what?”

“Oh, nothing, as yet; only his being hurt.”

“Doctor, you are not deceiving me? You know there is no trust to be placed in the testimony of one who has been so long in such a state, and may have had dreadful dreams. Stay, I must go to him myself. No one shall see him till I have; he is my own son!” and she went hastily from the room.

In a minute she returned greatly excited, informing me, hurriedly, that immediately on seeing her he had become once more insensible, and was perfectly sure he had recognised her.

“Go to him, doctor,” she continued, “I cannot: I foresaw this; I am lost!”

On going to the room where he lay, I found he had fainted. By use of the proper means he shortly re-

covered, though I was apprehensive, at first, that he had relapsed into the cataleptic state.

“Oh, Doctor C——,” he cried, “that midwife has been here: let her be seized; she is guilty of murder! She poisoned my child last night; I mean Emily’s infant. Don’t doubt me, doctor; I saw her, and will swear to it. Let her be taken before she can escape from the house!”

I stood thunderstruck at this, remaining with my eyes fixed upon the patient, as, spent with the exertion of so much and such excited speaking, he appeared falling away into another fainting fit, and hardly able to help him for bewilderment. Was I to credit this, or was I not? I felt overpowered by the vortex of thoughts that was seething in my mind, of crimes hideous and unnatural—perjury, adultery, murder, and all within a fearfully close-girt chain of consanguinity. Never was my curiosity more strongly stimulated than at that moment. It might be called a morbid curiosity. I listened to him with most absorbing attention; I was not conscious of any external thing save his voice, and the animated play of his features, as, with effort, and piece by piece, he detailed to me the guilty secrets that had for so long

been sepulchred in his torpid brain, and but for the power of my own noble profession might never have been raised into the light of day.

He had all along, it appeared, ever since Emily deserted the bed of her husband, been in the habit of coming nightly to the chamber she had chosen for herself. The iron stanchions of the lower windows, the ivy that covered the walls of the old Grange, the fantastic brick corncicing, and a rain-pipe from the roof, formed altogether a convenient and easy ladder for an agile young man like him to climb withal into that apartment, at midnight, when there was none to watch but the eye of One whose finger, may I be permitted to say, was so strangely manifest throughout this maze of evil, turning crime into the means of its own discovery and punishment. The night he first ventured upon such a visit after the birth of the child he had climbed to the window—it was open, for it was then summer and very warm. Silently catching hold of the sill, he raised his head above it and looked into the room. The mother he saw in bed in a deep sleep, and the little white cap of the baby he could see peeping from her bosom. Divided from her by the curtains, but open to him as he looked in at the win-

dow, he beheld two women sit together whispering. A small table was beside them, with a dim rushlight twinkling upon it. One of them was the midwife; to his astonishment he recognised the other to be the black beggar. She held in one hand a small phial, and with the other was forcing upon the white woman's hand an ivory squirt, with a long, rounded beak. After much talking, the latter drew up the handle of the squirt, filling it with the liquor from the phial. She then crept stealthily to the bedside and uncovered the infant, but returned again.

"I cannot do it," she said: "anything but this. Alas! I have been a mother, and the innocent looks so like my own lost darling! I have a feeling, a something within me, as if *my own blood flowed in the veins of that baby*—I cannot do it."

They talked together awhile, during which the black woman appeared to be remonstrating with and encouraging her, and again she approached the bed. She stooped over it a little, and returning to the negress said,—

"It is done—Christ have mercy upon me!"

At that instant they caught sight of his face, as from the black midnight outside he looked in upon

them through the open window. They were startled. The Obi woman fled to the door ; the midwife hesitated a moment, then going to the window loosened the hold of his fingers upon the sill, and he dropped a height of three stories among some loose stones and rubbish below ; and thus, and not from any violence of my poor friend Bruton, he met his wounds.

And now the skein was unravelled, and the whole dark maze of evil laid open to the light. This woman, it was plain, had had in her mind the removal at once of her brother and the child, who both stood between her and the immense property of her father—a property which she had dreamt of and hoped for so long, that it began to be to her a thing more to be desired than heaven itself, and which, upon her father's death, when she had fondly hoped to grasp it, she found bestowed upon an illegitimate mulatto. Bruton's violence of temper, his jealousy, and his having frequently denounced curses and threats against his wife and her child, afforded her an opportunity, she believed, of ridding herself of both by one happy stroke ; an opportunity of which she so successfully availed herself, as you have seen, unaware that in the act she was becoming the double murderess of her own off-

spring. But this was not all the sin consummated at the old Grange. There were other crimes, heinous and intricate, which I will not call up to pollute my pages again withal; suffice it that each met a punishment, even in this world, dreadful as its own dark nature.

In two hours after delivering this narration our patient was delirious, inflammation of the membranes of the brain had come on, a common consequence of the operation of the trephine.

I felt myself now placed in a situation of much embarrassment with regard to my proceedings. Should I give information against her on the strength of this statement or not? I was perplexed with doubt. In the first place, from my ignorance of law, I was not sure that a person could be accused of a crime of which another person had already been convicted, and for which that person had been condemned; next, how could I convince a jury that the whole statement was not a mere portion of the delirious ravings of the patient, especially since these had commenced so closely upon its delivery that it ran into them? Impressed with these considerations, I resolved to take advice before I committed myself.

I took the opportunity, however, that same evening to communicate the account I had received to her, a step for which I shall perhaps incur your censure. We stood together in one of the windows. As I proceeded she became pale as a corpse, and, aware seemingly of this, turned her back to the glass, thus throwing her face into shade. She heard me out, standing erect as a statue, only I noticed she clutched firmly a broad brass knob that served to hold aside the curtains. When I had done,—

“Now, sir,” said she, “I know not which to admire the most, the extravagance of my poor son’s raving, if you have told me truth, or your egregious folly in believing it, or thinking to make it a bugbear with which to frighten me: for whatever proceedings you may adopt you will find me prepared: only anything you may say derogatory to my character will be at your peril. In the meantime you will oblige me by immediately leaving my house. I will take care”—

Here she was interrupted by a servant, who entered hurriedly with—

“Madam, madam, the young master is dead!”

It came upon her like a thunderbolt. She fell back at once against the window, shivering the glass and

cutting her neck and arms. As soon as I saw in her signs of recovery, I left the room and the house. After that night this woman was never more seen.

I slept at the old inn of the Travellers' Joy, now kept by strangers. Shortly after midnight I was awakened by a glow of light illuminating the room. I was much startled at this, and on going to the window to ascertain its cause, was struck by beholding a bright flame rising over the woods, in the direction of the Grange. I stood gazing for a while. Presently I heard windows thrown up in the village, then voices speaking quickly and anxiously, then bolts withdrawn, doors opened, then heavy footsteps hurrying rapidly along. Anon the whole place was aroused, and all was commotion.

Before morning the old Grange was burnt to the ground, fit end for a scene of such accumulated evil. The more modern division, however, remained uninjured comparatively, a double gable of brick and stone having separated the two.

The only human being that was missing was the lady of the mansion, and some bones having been found among the ruins in a calcined and half-charred state, were pronounced to be her remains by a coroner's jury,

their verdict being death by accidental fire. These bones afterwards came temporarily into my possession. To the subjects of osteology and natural history I had devoted much attention, and had studied closely the papers of M. Desmoulins on these points.

The skull was very marked; the cranium being much compressed, the forehead depressed, and what are called the alveolar processes of the upper jaw projecting obliquely. From these and other particulars I was enabled with absolute accuracy to pronounce them the bones of a female of the negro race. Of this I was perfectly certain, and there was as little doubt that they formed the remains of the Obi sorceress. In further prosecuting the search among the ruins, way was made into a little arched coal-cellar. In this was found a small uncouthly-shaped apparatus, which proved to be a still of an exceedingly singular and primitive description. Beside it lay a bag of leaves, stems, and flowers. One look showed them to be those of the PRUNUS LAUROCERASUS, or *poison laurel*.

Whether the other woman perished in the fire or not I could never ascertain; neither can I tell the ulterior fate of Bruton's wife. She had disappeared during my absence on the continent, and I never heard of her after.

CHAPTER VIII.



STORY OF A GENIUS.

THERE is a certain great city within the shores of these islands, which we shall indicate by two letters of the alphabet, with a *minus* between, thus, A — z. This is not from any fear of detection in untruth, were we to name the actual place where our characters acted — our incidents occurred ; but, among divers other weighty reasons (the concealment of our own particular whereabouts being not the least influential), because we are aware that such mystic symbols for places, along with duly musical names for personages, heighten in a great degree the feelings of interest and delight where-with any narrative is perused.

Again : each reader, on meeting with such an algebraical denomination for a place, has less difficulty in

attaching to it the idea of his own particular scene and his own peculiar sympathies.

“ Bless me ! it is nothing but London,” cries one.

“ Dublin ! by all the goddesses,” shouts another.

A third swears by York, and a fourth is ready to do battle for Brummagem.

But thou, fairest, whose small white fingers are now pressing asunder the leaves of this book—fingers which I have watched, night after night, as they danced, twinkling in fairy flatterings over the ivory keys, the while my heart swelled within me, flooded with the melody they elicited ; thou who wert for years the confidant of my hopes and schemes, my joys and griefs ; of friends, my most beloved, though not my love ; well knowest thou the noble city I allude to, and sweet, sweet, albeit lost to me, will be the smile wherewith will be welcomed each lineament of its description !

A—z stands on a broad and fertile plain on the banks of a great river. This plain is from one to four or five miles wide, and is bounded by some elevations, which a Scot or a Welshman could hardly find it in his heart to call hills. Close to the base of the more northerly of these ranges flows the stream, westwards. Along the side of the southern again, a beautifully-

winding canal has been conducted. It was intended to connect the town with a rich mining district, but never was completed, and is little used.

Between the river and the canal stretches, south-westward, a district called the Woodlands, which has been chosen by several of the magnates of the city as the site for their country domains. It is a level and extremely fertile piece of alluvial land, studded with one or two abrupt, rocky, wood-covered hillocks, rising like islands, and everywhere intersected by a labyrinth of small roads and green-hedged lanes, leading between the mansions, and from them to the highways, the river, or the canal.

Most of these lanes are bordered with trees, some of them completely overshadowed and covered in for considerable distances, looking like tunnels through hills of foliage. The feeling of fragrant dampness in such situations is, on a sultry day, most refreshing; and when, on emerging from under the leafy arch that you have seen bright and vivid before you, the sun strikes upon you with all his joyous light and warmth; and between the elms that dot the wayside, you see over fields of waving corn, or haply of fallow pasture, the grove-embowered dwellings of the princely citizens,

with their white chimneys, and blue slate roofs shining in the sunbeams, and hear the bark of some watchdog, or the wild scream of a distant peacock, breaking the harmony of the lark and throstle, and the hum of countless insects; while eke another sense is borne down with the odour of the wild rose, the hawthorn blossom, or flowering bean-field, you become perceptive of a delight equal in intensity to any Heaven has spared to fallen creatures. The feeling of loneliness enhances, to a great degree, the luxury of the scene. You may wander for hours in this rural maze of field, and wood, and water, without seeing an individual, except perhaps a whistling country boy lounging idly along, or some old man sitting watching an older horse as it complacently gleans a mouthful of dinner from under the hedges.

The river-banks again consist of wide green meadows, all daisied over, and pied with yellow kingcups; with cattle grouped under the frequent broad shadowing trees, flapping away the flies from their glossy sides, and turning their heads to give you an indolent, contented stare, on your approach.

The canal, too, with its winding, sedgy waters, still and glassy, and its high, airy, whitewashed bridges, is

by no means the least lovely portion of the landscape. It skirts a rising ground; one of its banks is precipitous, and covered with brushwood; the other is low, and, where not completely shut in by thorn-fence or tree, affords a view of the distant city, of which your mind's ear hears the active hum, though dim and far it lies, shrouded under a smoky cloud.

But the term "the Woodlands" is not applied to the district merely; it is the name also of a beautiful village, which forms, as it were, its tiny metropolis. This is situated on the banks of the river, about two miles or so from the city. From the water it appears buried in a mass of foliage, beneath which you can see, here and there, the whitewashed walls of the happy little cottages; while from out one corner shoots heavenward the thin tapering spire of the parish church, itself hid from the view. A more beautifully rural place it would be difficult to fancy, even for a poet's thought.

Such is the scene where was born and lived, but died not, the gentle Lilius Raby, whose story is to follow. But ere it does, let us take you to the city. It is very large and very wealthy, though from what source its wealth arises, it matters not to tell. Its theatre

is a very magnificent one, and its public hospitals are numerous, and celebrated for their excellent appointment.

What a strange coupling—a theatre and a lazaret-house! Not more strange than that of literary genius and beggary, a trite and well-known union.

In a small, narrow, but busy and thickly-peopled street, was a little shop for the sale of pamphlets and stationery. Over the door was a sign, indicating that the trade belonged to Peter Merrick—but Peter was in his grave, and the comely woman behind the counter was his widow. Moreover, the graceful little boy at the window of the small back-parlour, standing before a large book, open upon a table, muttering, and anon almost reading aloud, whilst the slight movements of his person, and the quick glance of his eye, seemed to keep time (if we may use the expression) with the ideas in the text—that was her son, Frank Merrick, the hope and pride of her heart—and the volume was the second of an edition of Shakspeare, containing, among others, the plays of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth.

The boy was remarkable for several things—great personal beauty, a disregard for the company and

amusements of other children, and a singular talent for imitation. And the point was, that this could hardly be called mimicry; it was scarcely ever of a ludicrous description; he never mocked the halt, the deformed, or the stutterer; but, having once seen a man taken with a fit in the streets, on going home he represented the convulsions with such fearful truth, that his mother screamed with horror, and could not for some time be convinced that her son was not really become epileptic.

Again, when about a year older, happening to see an infuriated drunkard at a fair, snatch a bayonet from the side of a soldier, and rush brandishing it through the crowd, he narrated the fact in the evening to a party of neighbours round his mother's fireside, and acted the dismay of the spectators so as to draw expressions of wonder. But when, after performing all the steps from a simple stare of intoxication to the excitement of frenzy, he finally snatched up a knife and sprang wildly among them, they jumped to their feet and fled in actual terror from the house, while he, wiping the perspiration from his face, quietly asked his mother what she thought of that. Another time he chanced to be a spectator when a woman saw her only

son dragged dead from the river that runs through the town, and he acted her agony so forcibly, that his own mother, with all a parent's sympathy, implored and finally compelled him to cease.

The window of the little shop was filled with theatrical pictures—drawings of eminent actors in the characters of *Richard the Third*, *Young Norval*, *Rolla*, &c., gaudily coloured, but chiefly with cheap copies of celebrated plays—twopenny things with woodcuts—as “The Beaux’ Stratagem,” “The Gamester,” “New Way to Pay Old Debts,” “How to Rule a Wife,” &c. &c. These filled the panes, and along with quires of paper, sheaves of quills, and bundles of school-books, loaded the shelves.

Of the theatrical portraits he had a large collection of his own ; and by these pamphlets, circulating libraries, and other means, he was familiar with almost every drama that has obtained a place on the English stage. Some of them came to his hands prefaced by short accounts of the authors, Cumberland, Farquhar, Bickerstaff, &c. ; others by attempts at criticism on the pieces themselves, or on the actors by whom they had chiefly been represented.

The theatrical corners, too, of newspapers and other

publications were greedily perused by him ; yet, taking all these sources into account, considering likewise the singularly capacious and retentive memory he possessed, it seemed a puzzle how or where, while yet a boy under twelve years of age, he could have acquired such an extensive and correct, general and practical knowledge, of the drama and all dramatic details.

His chief resort in the town was the neighbourhood of the theatre. There, about the private stage-door, he would linger day after day, watching the players (great and happy people they !) as they went to, or returned from rehearsal, and making conjectures, from their appearance, which of them was likeliest to be the one that usually played *Hamlet*.

But when he could obtain by any means a shilling, the admission price to the high gallery, was not his happiness complete? There, perched far aloft, he would sit, his eyes devouring every motion—his ears every syllable—nay, often getting so absorbed and lost, as, by joining with his own voice and action in the business of the piece, to excite the laughter or incur the chastisement of those who sat around him.

From being frequently seen lounging about the stage-door, he attracted the notice of the porter (a

superannuated scene-shifter), then his friendship, patronage, and finally was admitted to look on at rehearsals, from a dark corner of the orchestra. From this event he began to consider himself a regular dramatic character,—one who had been behind the curtain, and could talk from experience, and not mere information.

But another haunt of his was the place I have described, the Woodlands. Wandering about the lanes and leafy mazes of that beautiful district, were spent hours, and days, and years of his time; for his mother was fond and indulgent, proud of, and sometimes troubled in thought about her son, for the ignorant laid his peculiarities to account of madness, and considered as instability what she deemed precocity of intellect.

With these feelings, and all a mother's love for an only child, and one so beautiful, she could not oppose a wish of his; and contented she was, if, after she had toiled a long day behind her counter, her boy came home in the evening with the mere account that he had been in the country, and his browned face and weary look bore witness to his statement.

It would have been an amusing thing to watch, un-

seen, the movements of the child of genius in this his chosen haunt. Sometimes he would walk for miles at a quick pace, silent, and looking downwards; and any passenger that met him would but have remarked the sudden gleaming lift of his deep blue eye from the ground, whereon again it would immediately settle. At other times he would ramble slowly and deviously about, rapt apparently in some train of thought, the external indications of which would be frequent floods of tears or bursts of laughter. Anon halting abruptly, he would pour forth with the most musical cadence and chastest accompaniment of gesture, long passages from plays and poems—for not to acting merely was his enthusiasm limited; his taste in drawing, sculpture, music, and above all, poetry, was perfectly after nature, and therefore most classical and refined.

An extensive acquaintance he had with the stores of English verse and oratory, and if one while a soliloquy from “Richard” occupied him, the next hour would find him astray among the flowers of Dryden, Gray, Spenser, or old Marlowe, whose

Come live with me and be my love

was an especial favourite with him.

The speeches, too, of Sheridan and other mighty spirits of that time, meagre and imperfectly reported as they found their way to him, yet afforded many noble passages for these solitary declamations, as also the impassioned eloquence of the old prophets in the Scriptures.;

In a very secluded part of the Woodlands was a curious hollow. It had been a quarry once, from which were obtained stones for embanking the canal; but from the inferior nature of the material, pervaded as it was by frequent seams of slate and schist, the works had been abandoned, and better stones brought from a distance. It was now filled with large blocks and heaps of rubbish, overgrown with grass; while it was completely encircled and hid by a thick plantation, except where a small green lane afforded access. An elevated platform of rock projecting from the side of the quarry, formed an excellent stage. The wild rose-bushes and other brushwood growing hard by, made good side-wings, while the mottled, mossy face of the overhanging precipice behind, had to do duty for back scenery of every description.

In this strange theatre (the brushes, stones, and grassy hillocks being the courteous and attentive audi-

ence), were whole plays performed by this zealous and enthusiastic actor. He had a way of taking, himself, in the order of the dialogue, every part in any one piece, from the hero down to the servant that delivers a letter. An alteration in the voice and gait—for he had none in dress,—sufficed to convert *Macbeth* into the cream-faced loon of a messenger—another into the stern sleep-walking, conscience-smitten lady. It would have been most striking to have seen the tact, the absolute truth to nature with which this boy could assume the gentle *Juliet* or *Desdemona*, characters for which his singular beauty and softness of feature seemed perfectly to have fitted him, and the next minute transform himself to the dread *Othello*, writhing under his mighty passion, or rave with *Lear*, or pour forth all the indignation of the insulted *Norval*.

There is no doubt that the workings of genius give rise, in the hearts of those possessing it, to feelings of delight, intense beyond the conception of ordinary minds; though to the equally exquisite perception of sorrow which the same gift entails, let the deaths of Chatterton and Keats, and the exile of Byron, bear testimony!

I hae been joyfu' gatherin' gear,
I hae been *happy thinking*,

was the saying of one who knew, perhaps, as well as ever did another being, all the sweets and all the bitterness attendant on the boon from Heaven. What must have been the rapture felt by this lonely, muse-possessed boy, whose own mind was thus for years his sole and ardently-desired companion ! Indeed, he afterwards stated that not even when drawing down the applause of the first audience in the world did he taste a pleasure half so pure, or half so sweet, as in these solitary personifications in his rocky, imaginative theatre, where there was none but his own approving spirit to be critic.

Yet there was one eye that sometimes watched with strange interest the movements of this youthful visionary. It was that of Lilius Raby, eldest daughter of the old clergyman of the Woodlands. She used to walk out frequently about the romantic district, leading a younger sister by the hand, and attended by a nursery-maid bearing a third little one in her arms.

Thus they often encountered Merrick as he roved about, and at last came to recognise him as “the crazy boy”—a title which the maid conferred upon him from his habit of talking aloud to himself as he walked ; for she concluded, like many sagacious per-

sons, that behaviour so unlike that of herself and other sensible people must be the effect of inferiority.

But little Liliás felt it was another light than madness that filled the eye whose quick momentary stare seemed to look through her, while yet the mind that governed it appeared to be not present in the glance, but far away among other scenes and other personages.

All this while, it might be imagined, the education of the boy was neglected. Far from it. Though often a truant from school, he had acquired by fits and starts more learning than persevering boobies could by the most dogged application. He drew well; wrote a swift, decided, and original-looking hand; composed very excellent English; and, in reading, had managed entirely to divest himself of all local accent, speaking the pure language of the stage. He had an octave-flute, too, that he could touch to the satisfaction of his auditors, and was rapidly acquiring French; indeed, at fifteen he finished a translation of the "Tartuffe" of Molière. Moreover, there hung about his person and manners that indescribable something which marks the presence of genius: what is conventionally called nobility, *i. e.* of birth, is rarely to be inferred from the

person or presence of the individual—true nobility, or that of intellect, however it may be *received*, can never be *mistaken*. One hour of the man is sufficient to establish his title.

Upon his reaching the age of fourteen it became necessary to find some business whereby he might be able to work his way through the world. Consequently his mother had him apprenticed to an extensive bookselling firm, from which her own small trade was supplied. But shortly his health failed under the confinement, dulness, and cold discipline of the warehouse and the counting-room, and he returned to her, delicate in frame and broken-spirited.

Shortly after, when a recurrence to his old studies and habits of life had once more brought the bloom to his cheek, and his friends were again planning an eligible employment for him, the master at whose school he had been, and who was as proud of him as his very mother could be, seeing that he considered the talent of the youth to have been imbibed from his tuition, and not the gift of nature, offered to take him as assistant or usher to teach the younger children. This proposal he accepted without reluctance, for it promised that the most magnificent (and therefore most hack-

neyed) passages of English literature would be continually before him, and he was to teach reading and elocution.

More than two years he continued in this situation, still constantly and largely increasing his dramatic knowledge and experience. He had appeared once or twice at the head of the pupils in the public exhibitions which the master considered it to his profit to make, and met with receptions flattering in the extreme, from crowded audiences. He now also began to be much sought in society, such as it was, on account of his histrionic powers, as well as a fund of wit, rich to overflowing, when he was "i' the vein," though at all other times clouded under a pall of habitual—almost melancholy reserve.

At this time he observed in the newspapers of the town an advertisement stating that an usher was wanted at the parsonage of Woodlands. Dr. Raby, a person of much erudition yet of little clerical interest, managed, though with some struggle, to live in affluence through his talents exerted as a teacher. He had usually several boarders whom he prepared for college with the branches of education considered necessary to that end. But their numbers had latterly

so much increased that he resolved to confine his own personal attention to the more advanced pupils, and procure an assistant to manage the younger. For this situation Merrick, now nearly sixteen years of age, made application and was at once accepted. And behold him at last, domiciled altogether at his beloved Woodlands. It was winter when he went there, and when the spring and glorious summer did come round, what happiness should be his!

But ere that came round a new bliss opened upon him. He found that his leisure—his evenings—were to be passed in the society of Lilius Raby. Oh, blind father! a doctor in much learning, and yet how ignorant of weak human nature! In this way he reasoned:—

“This young man, who by the way is twenty pounds a-year cheaper than any other I could get, is much too juvenile-looking himself to command much respect from the pupils. To have him live with them continually would soon bring upon him their disregard, and even contempt. No, I shall take care he meets them only in the schoolroom, and that in my presence. He shall be kept as apart from them as are my own daughters.”

The thought never struck him, in his anxiety about his pupils, that what was injudicious for them might be a thousand times more so for his own family.

“Lilias,” thought he, “is still a mere child, and the poor shy creature is frightened at the very thought of these boys.”

And well she might be. They were idle, noisy, mischievous youngsters of the upper ranks; but this other boy was one of nature’s own upper rank both in body and intellect.

And yet the doctor had adopted a most systematic arrangement in every point of view but this. His parsonage was a large, low, rambling edifice, in the style of an ornamental cottage, covered with creeping plants and flowers. The pupils and his own family occupied separate divisions, the communication between which was only passed by himself and the menials of the establishment. Nay, these two portions had different entrances—that used by the pupils opening into the village—that inhabited by the family being approached by a long avenue from a highway about half a mile distant. Besides, was not this usher a mere hired boy, at thirty pounds a-year, like the footman or any other servant?

The consequence was that, he being continually employed, either with the pupils or in his own study about his clerical duties, the two youthful creatures were left hours of every day and every *evening* to their own society, broken only by the play of the younger sisters, or the entrance or exit of servants.

And now, by what combinations of words—by what figures of language—by what appeals to heart or soul, can we express adequately the ecstatic delight that filled their young existence—dashed with no care, no thought, no doubt or fear? It was not by stealth they drank the honeyed cup of first and fondest, pure and enthusiastic love. No still small voice muttered to their hearts “Beware!” No dragon guarded the fountain, to be eluded by artifice or pacified with a sop. No, all was free, fearless, unconcealed, as the affection of the seraphs. He had met with a breathing being, passionate and beautiful as the Juliet of his dreams. She had found one surpassing, in her eyes, all she had ever conceived of human kind, and there was none that said to her, “Do not love him.”

Merrick had now nearly completed his growth, and was possessed of a person and presence admirably adapted for his heart-chosen profession, the stage.

The grace and flexibility of youth were united with the stature and carriage of manhood in his figure of all but perfect proportion. His features were striking, and in a high degree intellectual, and his *eye* was a poet's.

But she—gentle Liliás Raby! Have you ever remarked, reader, as characteristic of clergymen's daughters, a something exquisitely feminine? Be they pretty or plain, are they not a most dovelike class of creatures? This peculiar delicacy was the most noticeable point in her outward character. She was very beautiful, but your thought on seeing her would not have referred to this, but have been "What a sweet, tender, ladylike girl!"

A few months younger was all the difference in her age from Merrick's, but, though above the middle height, she looked more youthful than she was. This arose from the expression of her countenance—so smilingly shy, so pleasant, so sweet and loving, so innocent, unresisting, and trusting. It seemed not to say, "Do not injure me," but, "I know you have not the heart to hurt me." She had nothing of what women call spirit; if anything vexed her beyond what her gentle longsufferance could bear, a flood of

quiet tears would relieve her, and shortly you would see again the soft beam of her eye among the drops, like a pencil of sunlight falling through foliage upon a fountain.

She looked an impersonation of pity, only not dejected, but smiling upon its object—in short, formed she was to make a paradise of a virtuous man's home. And one there was that sought her earnestly; and when she would not, did he not bear with him his disappointment to the labours of an Indian clime, where the sun scorches blood into gold? And when after many years he returned, broken in body and not healed in spirit, have we not seen the tear spring to his eye as he detailed the hapless story of her whom his youth loved, wandering with us the while in those very Woodlands her presence had once made blissful?

Such were the two beings who passed the long evenings together in all the intoxicating delight of growing love.

Imagine the winter parlour, with its bright fire glowing cheerfully, the shutters closed and curtains drawn together, the table-lamp alight, the sofa wheeled round, with its corner full of books and papers. Anon the doctor would come in from school or study,

and tea, that kindest of meals, would be set on the table; he sitting absorbed, one hand holding his cup, the other pressing upon the leaves of a book, the while his daughter—most graceful of domestic offices—performed the matron's part of infusing and pouring out the draught. As soon as he had finished, returned a hasty thanksgiving, and heard the two children their lessons, away he would hurry once more to the quiet of his sombre library, while they would be left, until the hour of evening devotion, to the deep rapture of their own society. Then it was that Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, would take their turns with volumes of the pamphlet plays by all authors of old renown. Then it was that she would see Merrick's eye kindle with the fire of genius and hope, as he threw all the charm of living and moving reality around the glowing creations of the poet's fancy, and anon exulted in the bright prospects before him, with the enthusiasm and confidence begot by youth and the consciousness of power.

Or haply he would take some character by a great master, such as that of *Overreach* or *Shylock*, and enter into an investigation of its merits, its probability, originality, truth, beauty, or the skill evinced

in its development. He would show where nature was followed, where well depicted, where overstepped or fallen short of. If either of the latter were the case, he would spring up and act the character as it stood, then give it words and action as he was of opinion it ought to be.

Thus he soon inspired her with a dramatic enthusiasm all but equal to his own; but it was not to act herself, but to see him as an actor—to see him rise to the pinnacle of what he had led her to consider a noble profession. At other times they would talk long together of authors and actors—Jonson, Otway, Rowe, Mossop, Macklin, Garrick, Cooke, the Kembles; their genius, their greatness, their trials, miseries, or deaths. He had an endless fund of such details, and appeared to appreciate with his whole soul the honours and fame of the characters under discussion.

Poetry they read together, while he taught her how to lend to it the charms of action and musical cadence; or he would take up the pencil, and, while her sweet face beamed over his shoulder, like the evening star over a young tree, would sketch scenes or characters from plays or poems, or portray her as Belvidera,

Ophelia, or Juliet. Besides, was there not his flute, and her piano, her embroidery and needlework, her many little domestic avocations, which he was always at hand to expedite or himself perform?

Thus were passed these blissful hours, and thus was won, and hopelessly lost, the heart of sweet Lilius Raby! Her passion grew upon her strangely. It was as if love had been poured into her bosom from a vessel, increasing and increasing till her heart was full, and at last it overflowed. Thus:—

One evening they sat side by side: before them was the accustomed Shakspeare, the play “Romeo and Juliet,” and they acknowledged with their whole acquiescence the beauty of that most masterly delineation of youthful affection. Cheek to cheek, the curls on their temples intermingling, they had read over the balcony scene, the loveliest passage and most impassioned in all literature till Byron dreamed Haidee. As they read it, she felt as if lifted above this earth—as if borne into a new world of more intense and purer life, love, and delight. He, again—his cheek flushed, his pulses crowded to his heart, and his eye glowed as it looked now upon the page, and now into the beauty of his companion.

“Is it not heavenly?” cried he. “Let’s read it over again; let’s act it, Miss Raby. You will be Juliet; that chair shall be the balcony!”

And springing up he began the scene:—

He jests at scars that never felt a wound!

As he went on, Lilius’s feelings completely vanquished her. There was truth in his adoring gaze, deep fervour in the heart-thrilling melody of his voice. It was the eloquence of nature, not of art. Every glance of that eye, every movement of that graceful frame, every line of that noble countenance spoke passion, single, devoted, unsubdued. She felt her heart giving way within her, till, when he came to the lines—

It is my lady—Oh, it is my love!
Oh, that she knew she were!—

she could restrain herself no longer, but fell with a flood of weeping upon his neck, exclaiming amid the bursting sobs,—

“This is not acting, my own dear Merrick; I know I am—I know it!”

“Thou Juliet of my soul!” cried he, in a voice that sounded strange and unnatural from the excess

of his emotion, as, after pressing a convulsive kiss upon her lips, his head dropped upon her shoulder.

At that instant the door was opened and the doctor entered the room, and continued there unnoticed by them for a little time. He had come to apply to Lilius for a new ribbon to his spectacles; the old one had given way, and, as he carried the glasses in his hand, it was some time before he made out the precise state of matters. But when he did, the lamentable error he had committed rushed at once upon his mind, and he turned pale with anger and self-reproach.

As soon as they saw him they sank, blushing and self-condemned, into the nearest seats, while he began in a subdued but quivering voice,—

“Mr. Merrick, you must leave this house, and never enter it again. You may stay till the morning, but I had much rather you would go now, and I will take care to have your clothes and books, along with a quarter’s salary, sent to your mother’s place to-morrow. Will you oblige me and go now?”

He said not a word in reply, but got up to leave, casting one look at her as he went. She sat, leaning forward upon the table, her face concealed within her

arms, sobbing in the depth of her sorrow and shame, while her little sister, crying bitterly in sympathy, kept pulling at her dress to attract her attention.

He took his cap and left the house, wandering about the neighbourhood all that night alone. Next morning, fatigued in body and much excited in mind, he returned to his mother's dwelling. There he continued for several days; but the summer was now at hand, and shortly he began to long for the excursions he had formerly so much enjoyed, and for his wild, lonely theatre at the Woodlands.

It was not long till he was seen rambling as of old about the district. Seen!—by whom? By her, fair Lilius Raby. She knew he could not stay long away, and it was with the certainty of finding the lost one that she left the house to wander about the fragrant lanes and fields.

Her father, since the usher's dismissal, had never once alluded to the events that caused it, but in his demeanour towards her preserved a marked severity. He also made the parlour his study, having such books or instruments as he required brought from the library. He offered no opposition, however, to her enjoying the walks she had been used to in the vicinity,

and daily she took advantage of this, and, as often as she did, she found him expecting her.

And now re-commenced the connexion with tenfold its former ardour, from the reaction after the interruption it had received. The tree of love, like that of the garden, often requires a check to increase its blossoming. You never know what the passion is till absence, anger, or a rival, break the attraction; nor yet do you altogether know it till the obstacle is once more removed.

For several weeks of that most delicious of seasons, the end of spring and beginning of summer, they roved about together, the sweetness of their delight being flavoured with the aroma (if we may use the metaphor) of stealth and danger. They had now hopes, fears, and plans for the future, to occupy them, but lightly did these thoughts sit upon their bosoms, for neither of them was yet fully seventeen years old. They walked arm-enclasping each the other, or sat on banks to look at sunsets (cloud-scenery as he styled it), or gathered flowers to make her an Ophelia, or in the depths of his leafy theatre enacted scenes. He was writing a drama too—a tragedy—the subject the story of Belshazzar; and used to read, or rather act,

the lines as he composed them for her sweet criticism. This was too happy to be of long duration.

He applied for employment as a player in the theatre of A—z. They had long thought and schemed together about this step; he with ardent longing—she with a similar feeling, dashed a little with jealousy; for she began sometimes to fear that the drama was her successful rival, and that the love he bore for her, great as it appeared, was but temporary; the single and engrossing desire, the master affection which she deemed should be all her own, being, but too plainly, fixed upon theatrical distinction.

But as yet these were only cloud-shadows, flying across the sunny field of her innocent mind and instantly disappearing; for if ever one possessed the art of making himself beloved he did; and with all the warmth, tenderness, and delicacy of his attention there were a sincerity and devotion that rendered her happy: and then that nobility of thought which shone through his every word and action made pride of her lover mingle with the pleasure of the emotion itself.

He obtained the situation (for the theatre at A—z continued open all the year round, only a few weeks' recess, late in autumn, being allowed the company),

and was engaged as a general actor, at a salary of twenty-four shillings a-week to begin with. He was not permitted to try any of the better-paid walks of his profession, such as the tragic leader or low comedian—these were already filled by established hands; but from the grace of his appearance had assigned to him the department of what is called walking gentleman. Even into this, the most insipid of all lines of character, he managed to throw so much spirit as soon to render him a favourite with all parts of the house.

It was not now so often that he could find his way to her society. The daily rehearsal, the transcribing and studying of parts, the procuring of dresses and properties, occupied his whole attention; so that, save on sabbaths and holidays, it was rare that he could find time for a walk to the Woodlands. But as their interviews became the sweeter from their concealment, so they became more precious a thousandfold from their rarity. They never parted but they pledged to meet again at a fixed time.

Once they missed tryst—the weather prevented her from leaving the house. He was there, and waited with a heavy heart till every light was extinguished, then returned weary and dispirited to his home.

Next day she made an errand to the city, and walking thither found her way to the little stationery-shop. She passed and repassed the door frequently (as she had often done in former times), without having the courage to enter.

At length he made his appearance going to rehearsal. With a smile of rapturous joy he recognised her, and led her blushing and diffident into his parent's presence. The matron's heart was filled with admiration at her exceeding beauty and refinement of manner and appearance—pride that her son should have such an acquaintance, and a strong regard for the sweet girl personally. And thus commenced a friendship—an interchange of maternal and filial love—between these women, which continued to the last unbroken. He continued to play at the theatre all summer. The short recess was almost altogether passed at the Woodlands, among the lanes and fields bestrewn with the odorous leaves of autumn.

But there was care mingled now with the bliss of those hours of love. Gentle Liliast, why is your pillow wet with lonely weeping?—why do you tremble?—why does the red blush mount your cheek, and your eye seek the ground, as it meets his, your lover's? Where-

fore has your look now so much of the woman—so little of the girl? True it is, there is one that woos you with your father's sanction; but can that account for the anxiety that sits upon your white forehead—for the suspicion that clouds the blue heaven of your eye? Alas, alas! deeply do we fear for your heart's *innocence*, and therefore peace.

A new prospect now opened to Merrick. The manager of the theatre became bankrupt: there was a split among the proprietors, a break-up in the company; and at length an old theatre, which had been for some years used as a Dissenting place of worship, was fitted up once more and opened as an opposition playhouse. Merrick was offered the department of leader in the newly-organized company—eagerly accepted it—and was advertised to open the season in the character of *Hamlet*. This was the turn in the tide of his affairs that was to lead to fortune. He resolved it should be a triumph; and, to make it so, it was necessary that those he loved should witness it.

After much preparation the eventful evening came round. The old house was crowded to the ceiling, and resounded with cheers and applause in anticipation. The manager—the low comedian of the former

company—opened with a poetical address (from Mer-
rick's pen), and immediately, amid all the noise and
disorder of an opening night, the play began.

But on the entrance of *Hamlet* there was an absolute
hush for some seconds, as he came forward with the
King and Queen, till, when he bowed to the audience,
a thunder of applause came down. This was before
he had uttered a word, and was occasioned by the
mere spirit of his look, and slender, but admirable
symmetry of his frame, so excellently fitted for the
character he had assumed, and so beautifully displayed
by its dress—the most graceful and gentlemanly of all
theatrical costumes. It was not the dark frock in
which it is the fashion now-a-days to play the part, but
the close-fitting black suit and inky cloak in which the
great John Kemble is portrayed.

From pause to pause this applauding continued
throughout the play, as the divine philosophy of the
student *Prince of Denmark* fell liquid from the lips
of his princelike representative, in cadences as dulcet
to the ear as the thoughts they conveyed were to the
heart. He looked the very Hamlet that Shakspeare
thought—the youthful, graceful, noble—the studious,
meditative, and intensely sorrowful Hamlet; and

during the delivery of the soliloquies that gem the part you could have heard a foot moved anywhere in the house. He seemed not only inspired himself, but to have communicated a portion of his spirit to the usually tame company, for they supported him excellently.

The audience were surprised—struck with admiration. They had never expected in the remotest degree such a display, and their welcome of it was proportioned to their feelings. But there were two of that audience who, though they gave no noisy indication of their satisfaction, yet many a time during the personation looked into each other's eyes with wonder, delight, and pride, and rejoiced in his success with a joy which hardly his own could exceed.

These were two females that sat almost concealed from the view of the house in an old-fashioned sort of box in the proscenium, which was entered from within the scenes—Mrs. Merrick and Liliasthis mother and his love. Never before had the latter seen him to such advantage; but when, on being long and vociferously called for after the curtain fell, he came forward, his eye beaming with exultation, and in a few elegant sentences expressed his gratitude for the

reception he had met with, poor Lilius leaned upon his mother's bosom and wept for joy.

The play was over shortly after eight o'clock in the evening; a carriage was waiting, and into it she was handed by her lover, with a cloak thrown over his stage-dress, and, after a rapid drive of two miles to the Woodlands, was set down within half a mile of her home, whither she went as if returned from an evening walk. This plan they afterwards frequently adopted, and by it she was enabled to see him draw universal favour and applause in the characters of *Richard the Third*, *Macbeth*, *Zanga*, *Penruddock*, *The Stranger*, *Duke Aranza*, and many others, without being suspected—at least by her father.

Merrick's career was a most gratifying one to himself and all who cared for him. He supported and increased, in a variety of the most celebrated and difficult characters in the drama, the effect he had produced in his first appearance; though certainly *Hamlet* continued to be his masterpiece.

His salary was largely improved, and the theatre he had first played in became deserted, and was soon shut up to be opened again as an arena for horse exhibitions. He became a perfect lion—came regu-

larly into fashion—was the chief attraction in all the coteries of the place that had any pretensions to be considered literary or dramatic ; and many an eye was cast after him with curiosity, admiration, or envy, as he appeared in the public places of the city. Criticisms on his playing appeared in the local newspapers—some breathing unqualified praise, and prophesying great things, for Kean was then in the full tide of his popularity, and it was the age of Kemble and Young, and Siddons and Jordan ; others written in detraction : but the best proof of real merit, the returns in money, were unequivocally in his favour.

He now caused his mother to retire from her small shop, and thus she became entirely dependent upon him for her living, if we except a few pounds in cash, the product of the sale of her stock, and the savings of some years which the scanty trade allowed her to set aside. A house in a quiet and genteel suburban street he had furnished in a rather expensive style, and here they took up their abode.

But while these events were going on, his mother trembled to see habits of dissipation growing upon him daily stronger and stronger ; and though he repeatedly assured her, with the laugh of self-confidence, that

the temptation of company and excitement merely led him into indulgence, and that his mind had perfect command over itself, and could at any time refrain, yet it was only by threatening to inform Liliás of his doings that she effected a tardy and imperfect amendment.

But Liliás herself now, amid all the joy attendant on his success, perceived, with a terror and alarm hardly accountable to others, continual symptoms of a progressive decrease in the ardour of his feelings towards her. He began to have fits of absence in her company, to look as if he felt it insipid at times, and devoid of interest. Then once or twice he missed appointment; and though his excuses were valid enough to satisfy even an ordinary lover, yet well she knew the time had been when he would gladly have overleaped more powerful obstacles than them to be but near the house she lived in, and watch at a distance the light twinkling from her window.

Reader, is there any greater mental pang than to see the affection of one you vehemently love growing less and less, while your own suffers no abatement—to see her gradually and surely falling away from you, while all your efforts to arrest or recall her passion are

ineffectual, and at last you must begin to affect coolness yourself, while your very heart is burning, and you see her indifference is real? Have you ever known this feeling?—transplant it to the heart of a woman, young, beautiful, and all gentleness, and you will conceive the torture that wrenched the bosom of poor Liliás.

But even this was far from sufficient to account for the indications she gave of agony in thought. It was not mere imagining, it was actual fear: she was utterly miserable; seeming continually as if she would have spoken—would have appealed tearfully—have implored him, but that the feelings of her womanly nature forbade.

But though the quick eye of the slighted or, haply, injured girl perceived this, his mother's, his own, were blind to it. He was not himself aware of any abatement in his affection, and now at length, when his gains had made him comparatively independent, he claimed her promise, long before made, that they should be united.

As he breathed the request into her ear, a weight seemed lifted from her bosom—a weight of apprehension and dread that had long pressed upon it, though

known only to her own silent thoughts—and, powerless with sudden joy, she fell into his arms.

“And will you leave off company, Merrick, and drinking; it is so low and coarse, so unworthy of your intellect—will you, love?”

“All, all, my own heart’s darling! I will come home always as soon as the tragedy is over—except when I have to play in the afterpiece. I will cut liquor, and all company but yours. Will you trust me, Lily?”

When she left him that evening at the end of the avenue that led to the parsonage, she was happy. When did happiness visit her again?

On the following day the manager of the theatre received a letter from a celebrated tragedian then starring in the provinces. It was in answer to an offer of an engagement, and stated his willingness to play for three nights at the theatre of A—z, at the terms, if we do not mistake, of fifty pounds for each of the two first nights, and the third to be a benefit. Enormous as these were, they were immediately accepted, and shortly the great tragedian arrived.

The prices at the doors were raised to nearly double their usual amount, yet the house was crowded—ac-

tually jammed ; the very orchestra was filled, the musicians playing what little music was wanted under the stage.

The play was "Othello," and the part of *Iago* fell to Merrick.

Those who were present on that occasion had an opportunity of seeing what very few have witnessed—two of Shakspeare's most magnificent characters acting and reacting upon each other, in the hands of the great tragedian and one fully qualified by nature and study to play second to him. The great master himself was struck by the acting of the youthful *Iago*. It had something about it so fresh and original, was so evidently the fruit of nature's gift—genius, that he could not help, several times during the piece, giving utterance to flattering sentences of approval and encouragement.

The next evening he played *Richmond* to the Londoner's *Richard the Third*, to that gentleman's so great satisfaction, that, when on the concluding night he afforded him also admirable support in his part of *Lear*, he requested him to be his companion to a certain city in Scotland which he was about to visit, the manager of whose theatre was not celebrated for the

brightness of the company he maintained, and to which starring actors usually saw the propriety of carrying with them some person of tolerable talent to play the second parts.

An arrangement was hastily entered into with the manager of A—z, and the following afternoon Merrick, intoxicated with his likelihood of becoming the friend of such a man, left with him in his carriage.

The friendship of the star towards the young actor was won more and more every hour he spent in his society, by his originality, enthusiasm, and the deference, almost amounting to idolatry, he paid towards himself. Another point was this: — was lamentably addicted to the vice of intemperance. In the practice of this also he met with a ready and efficient co-operation from this his new connexion. Intoxication seemed no longer an error in the company of such a spirit. It was no sin, but a way of stripping the chains and fetters of the world from the bright aspiring thought, and letting it loose to range at will through all being, material or intellectual. Merrick deemed it honourable—how much it was pleasurable his heart acknowledged.

Thus speedily conforming in habits and tastes to his

great principal, he was overjoyed when the latter offered to procure him employment in London—perhaps at Drury-lane, if he would apply to him there. Brightest of prospects ! He asked but a few days to make final arrangements, which completed, he would proudly avail himself of his condescension.

Merrick arrived hurriedly at A—z. He looked excited in all his actions, appeared carried away by some strange infatuation influencing his every proceeding. After a very imperfect arrangement of his affairs, which, however, he assured his mother was immaterial, as it would be only temporary, he prepared to leave for London. He had to pay a considerable sum to the manager by way of compensation for the rupture of his engagement ; and what with this, the preparations for his journey to London, and recent expenses, he left even his mother's subsistence in a most precarious state. He was, however, full of confidence, and promised her immediate and large remittances.

He must part, too, with *her*.

He despatched a note to the Woodlands by a trusty conveyance, stating that next day at noon he would meet her in the beechen lane, between the canal and

the theatre (the hollow so called, and before frequently alluded to).

She went, poor thing! and, when she had waited a couple of hours at the trysting-place, was at last gratified by seeing him approach, all haste and anxiety. His excuse for his tardiness was the multitude of things he had to settle, as he was about to start next day for London.

The intelligence came upon her like a thunderbolt: she turned deadly pale; her eyes were opened wildly, and swam, as she walked by his side for fully an hour without speaking a word, but listening to him as he ran on talking of the bright vista in life that was now opening before him, and hanging with both her arms on his for very weakness from the sudden shock. Often she bent upon him that look of anxiety and alarm which we have before described—at length changing to an expression of absolute despair. It seemed as if she had some dreadful secret to impart to him, but could not—something which made her wholly dependent upon him, leaving her without a will of her own, or a hope apart from his.

At length it was the time when she should go into her father's house. He, too, had to leave her in great

haste, an immense deal of business being, by his account, yet to be transacted that evening. The fact of the matter was, that a public dinner was to be given him in one of the taverns at A—z, by some of his former theatrical friends, on his departure.

Having made her promise to come to his mother's house the following morning, to bid farewell and see him away, as he said, he took a hasty leave.

“Good-by, then, Lily,” said he, kissing her on the cheek, and turning to go.

“Good-by—good-by—g—g—” the guttural syllable stuck in her throat, impeded by the choking ball that seemed rising from her heart, till, hearing his steps no longer, she threw herself upon a heap of leaves that had been swept behind the gate from the long tree-covered avenue, and there knelt and wept bitterly, and prayed. Alas! how very bitterly, the Heaven that heard her knows!

The next day she was at his house; she found his mother alone, with her eyes filled with tears—of sorrow, that her son was going—of joy, that it was to London and to be a great man. How different was her own condition!—her eyes had not once all that night been closed in sleep. She had a worn and

harassed, and yet much-excited look, fearful to see on the face of one so young and beautiful.

There was a kind of unnatural calm and carelessness in her behaviour, while her eye was burning and glistening. She sat, without speaking, beside the garrulous old woman, till he came in.

He had not long to stay—the mail was to start within ten minutes. Hurriedly he kissed his mother's cheek, and approached Miss Raby.

He pressed her to his bosom; as he did so—

“Oh, Merrick! will you leave me?” she burst forth, in an agonized voice: “my own only friend—my love—my husband! Do not go from me!—do not—oh, do not—do not!”

“Pshaw, Lilies! dearest—this is silliness. You know I will not be long away—a couple of months at furthest.”

“Oh, do not forsake me—my heart will break! I shall die, Merrick!—stay with me—stay—I am—I am—I—I——”

Here she reeled half-round, and fell heavily on the carpet, in a dead faint.

Bending down, he raised her head into his mother's lap, and, passionately kissing her lips, while his warm

tears fell fast into her bosom, sprang up, out of the room, the house, and was gone.

The mother, herself grieving much, proceeded to take steps for the restoration of her youthful friend, and, in doing so, discovered, from the information of her matronly skill, that fair Liliás had stooped to folly, and was soon to reap its reward—shame.

Now, the dreadful secret was out, though unspoken, and he was away in ignorance of it.

As soon as she had restored her to consciousness she breathed into Liliás's ear her surmises, and, not denying, but weeping much in answer, the fair girl hid her face in her bosom, and these two lone women remained together, in the bitterness of their sorrow, till the evening.

END OF VOL. I.

